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TWO

DISCOURSES.

I. On PRAYER.

Wherein are several Things, with great Impartiality, recommended, particularly, to the *Papists*, and *Dissenters* of all Denominations;

With a becoming Freedom, to the *Infidels*;

With the most affectionate Esteem, to the Clergy;

With the highest Deference, to the *Nobility*, and *Gentry*.

II. On the SACRAMENT.

To which are added,

I. A Sermon on the *One Thing needful*.

II. On the Observation of the *Sabbath*.

III. On the Importance of *Public Worship*.

By the Rev. W. WEBSTER, D. D.
of *Ware* in *Hertfordshire*.

Published for the Benefit of the AUTHOR.

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To the Moſt Reverend

HIS GRACE

The Lord Primate, and Metropolitan of all *England*;

To whoſe kind Approbation of my Undertaking, it was chiefly owing that I proceeded in it;

Theſe DISCOURSES are,

With humble Gratitude,

And the higheſt Reſpect,

Inſcribed by

HIS GRACE's

Moſt obedient Servant,

W. WEBSTER.

SEMINARY

PREFACE.

WHEN I first proposed writing upon the important Subject of Prayer, *it was objected that there was nothing* new *to be said upon it. Whether I have made any* Improvement, *I must leave to the Determination of my Readers; but, if I have added no* new Materials *to the old Stock, my Book, notwithstanding, may be more compleat than any yet extant on the Subject.—Where so many Persons of Ability have written upon any Subject, they have excelled one another upon different Parts of it; and,* therefore, *if any one has Judgment enough to select their peculiar Excellencies, and connect them handsomely together, their* united *Beauties must excel any one of those Books out of which they are collected.*

Another Advantage new *Books have over* old *ones from the* Curiosity *of Mankind. The World is more inquisitive into the Merit of* modern *Performances, and more inclined to look into them, than to enquire after those which have been long,* like a dead Man, out of Mind. *Books are like* Fashions; *when they become* old, *(unless they be* superlatively *Excellent, and the Authors of* supereminent *Reputation) they are laid aside. The* Materials *may be the same, but the* Dress *must be altered, or they will be thought* awkward.

This

This is an Advantage that is owing to the Taſte *of the World; but there is a* real *and* ſubſtantial *one, which has its Foundation in* Reaſon. *Modern Books may not only be better adapted to the prevailing* Guſt *of the Reader, but to the* Circumſtances, *and* Exigences of the Times. *The Enemies of Religion and Virtue, like the* military *Gentlemen, are perpetually inventing new* Weapons, *new* Evolutions, *new* Methods of Attack, *which will require a ſuitable Alteration in our Arts of* Defence.

I ſhall mention but one Advantage more, and that ariſes from the Diſpoſition of the Parts, *wherein the* laſt *Writer may excel by the Aſſiſtance of his Predeceſſors. Much Strength and Perſpicuity depend upon this happy Arrangement; as in a* Picture, *where there is a Group of Figures, they muſt all be placed in ſuch an advantageous Situation, that they may throw Light and Luſtre upon each other.*

By the Help of theſe Obſervations let my Readers judge and try my Book; but, as I write with Freedom, *let* them *judge with* Candor.

There are two Things more that will be expected from this Preface; viz. *an account of the* Additions *that are made to the* original *Deſign, and why the* Publication *of theſe Diſcourſes has been ſo* long delayed.

The Sermon upon the one thing needful, *and thoſe upon the* Sunday, *had the good Luck to make ſo conſiderable an Impreſſion upon many Perſons, that I could not help thinking them worth preſerving from the common Fate of* ſtitcht *Things;*

the

the other upon the Importance of publick Worſhip, *though a great Part of it is woven into the Book, is here printed by itſelf at the particular Requeſt of a Gentleman of Fortune, belonging to the* Guards, *who happened to be at Church where I preach'd it.*

For delaying the Publication, *I have too good an Excuſe. For ſeveral ſubſtantial Reaſons it was highly expedient that I ſhould make the Deſign as profitable to myſelf as could honeſtly be done; but, the Importunity of my* few *Subſcribers would not permit me to do it. I hope, many of my Friends, who might have Reaſons for not encouraging my* Subſcription, *will not be able to find any* good *ones againſt promoting the* Sale *of my* Book; *if not for* my *Sake, yet, for the Sake of* Religion, *at a time when it ſtands in ſo much need of the* united *and moſt vigorous Aſſiſtance of its Friends. One thing I promiſe them, that it is the laſt Trouble of the kind that I ſhall give them. I have, indeed, been deſired to engage, again, as an auxiliary Correſpondent to a Paper of the like kind with* my Miſcellany, *which I declined, not out of* Pique, *but* Incapacity: *I can honeſtly take up the Wiſh of* Cato—— Whilſt I yet live, let me not live in Vain—*But, I muſt ſubmit to the* Decays of Nature; *and am very thankful to God for the little Service that I have been able to do my* Religion, *my* Country, *and my* King; *beſides* ſome *good Offices in* private *Life. Had my* Abilities, *and* Opportunities, *of doing good been greater, I am willing to* believe *that I ſhould have done ſomewhat more.* THIS *I* know, *that my* ſmall *Ta-*

lent has not been hid in a Napkin. THIS has been, *through a* long *Course of uninterrupted* Fatigue *and* Vexation; *This, I humbly hope*, will shortly be, *at the* Hour of Death, *my great Support.*

As I am going to take a solemn, final Leave of the World, as a public Writer, it is fit that I should die, as I most sincerely do, in perfect Charity with all Mankind.

To those who have given Encouragement to my Undertaking, I return my hearty Thanks, hoping for the Continuance of their good Offices. I must deny myself the Pleasure of being particular *in the Acknowledgement of Obligations, for fear of giving Offence, where I should be glad to shew the greatest Respect. And* now,

Christian Reader,

Vale,——et in æternum Vale.
Farewell——for ever.

N. B. In the following Discourse, the Chapter *Concerning the* Effects *of Prayer*, is, by Mistake, divided into two, at Page 87.

A

DISCOURSE

ON

PRAYER.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the Meaning *of the Word*, Prayer.

AS Prayer is an Act of *religious Worſhip*, and a CHRISTIAN Duty, I ſhall, Firſt, Enquire into the ſeveral Acceptations of the Word in Scripture.—Sometimes it is us'd in a *limited* Senſe, ſignifying a *Part*, or *Parts*, of the *general* Duty; at other Times it comprehends the *whole* of the Duty; of both which Senſes I ſhall give ſome Inſtances.—At the *6th* of St. *Math.* v. 7, 8, it is uſed to ſignify that Part of *Prayer* which we call *Petition*, or craving Bleſſings, whether *Temporal*, or *Spiritual*. "But ye when ye pray, uſe not vain Repeti-
"tions, as the Heathens do, for they think they
"ſhall be heard for their much Speaking. Be
"not ye, therefore, like unto them, for your
"Father knoweth what Things ye have need
"of before ye aſk him." From which Words

it is clear that our Saviour, in this Place, ſpeaks of their aſking ſuch Mercies as they, *themſelves*, did need; tho' when he delivered that Form which we call the *Lord*'s Prayer, in the next Words, he gave it as a Prayer, *itſelf*, and a *Pattern* of all other Prayers, both for *ourſelves*, and *others*, even *all Mankind*. Again, *Math.* xxi, 22. "Whatever ye ſhall aſk in Prayer, be-"lieving, ye ſhall receive." In which Place our Saviour manifeſtly ſpeaks of that Part of Prayer which we call *Petition* for a Supply of their *own perſonal* Neceſſities. I ſhall cite but one Inſtance more of this kind. *Math.* xxvi, 39. "And he went a little farther, and fell on his "Face, and *prayed*, ſaying, O! my Father, "if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me, "nevertheleſs, not my Will, but thine be done." Now this is called *Prayer*, tho' our Saviour did at that Time, evidently pray for *himſelf only*.—In other Places Prayer ſignifies that Part of the Duty which we call *Interceſſion*, or begging God's Mercies for *others*. Thus *Math.* v, 44. "Pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, "and perſecute you.—And as *Prayer*, in the Places abovecited, is uſed to ſignify *Petition* for Bleſſings for *ourſelves*, or *others*, ſo elſewhere it ſignifies *Praiſe*, or *Thankſgiving*. Thus, Eph. i. 15, 16. "Whereas I, alſo, after I heard of "your Faith in the Lord Jeſus, and Love to all "the Saints, ceaſe not to give Thanks for you "making mention of you in my *Prayers*. I forbear to trouble the *Engliſh* Reader with the *original Greek*, but the *ſame* Word is uſed in all

theſe Places.—But, farther, ſometimes it ſignifies a *vocal*, at other Times a *mental* Prayer.—Firſt, *vocal*, or that which is utter'd by Words, thus, *Acts* xx. 36. "And when he had thus "ſpoken, he kneeled down and *prayed* with them *all*." And, conſequently, he prayed *aloud*, for, otherwiſe, none could have *join'd* with him.—By *mental* Prayer I underſtand the Soul's ſpeaking to God *inwardly*, without expreſſing itſelf by Words, or *articulate Sounds*. Thus *Hannah* prayed, 1 Sam. i. 13. "She ſpake in her Heart, "only her Lips moved, but her *Voice* was not "heard."—Now, that this was *Prayer*, is evident from what ſhe ſpake to God, which, doubtleſs, was a *Petition* for a Son; which Petition is, as I have already ſhewn, a *Prayer*. Again, The Word ſignifies the Prayer of a *ſingle* Perſon, or of a *whole Congregation*. Thus our Bleſſed Lord prayed by *himſelf* alone, *Math* xxvi. 42, 44.—That of a *whole Congregation*, at the 21*ſt* of the *Acts. v.* 5; where we read that St. *Paul*, and the Diſciples of *Tyre*, kneel'd down on the Shore and prayed.

Having cited ſeveral Paſſages of Scripture, where the Word *Prayer* is us'd in a *limited* Senſe, ſignifying ſome *Part*, or *Parts* of the *general* Duty; I ſhall now cite ſome others, where it ſignifies the *whole* of the Duty. 1 *Theſ.* v. 17. St. *Paul* commands the *Theſſalonians* to *pray* without *ceaſing*. In this Place, I ſay, the Apoſtle ought, in any wiſe, to be underſtood to comprehend the *whole* Duty, for the following Reaſons:

Firſt, Becauſe here is no *Limitation* of the Word, there being no Epithet, or any other Circumſtance, which obliges us to underſtand it of one particular *Part* only; for which Reaſon it ought to be taken in the largeſt Senſe, without any *Limitation* of the Meaning of the Phraſe, ſince the holy Penman, himſelf, has not confin'd it, but leaves us to interpret it of the *whole* Duty of Prayer.

Secondly, *All* Parts of Prayer are equally enjoined (as I ſhall afterwards have Occaſion to ſhew) in the holy Scriptures. Now, ſince the Word muſt be underſtood, either of the *whole* Duty, or of ſome *one*, or *more* Parts, I would fain know how we can underſtand it of any *particular Part*, ſince in other Places, all of them are commanded; and, conſequently, all of them are equally neceſſary to be practiſed; I ſay, who will offer to determine *which* of them is here meant? It is highly neceſſary, therefore, that the Words be ſo explained as to contain *all* the Parts, ſince none muſt exclude *any* of the Parts of Prayer.

Thirdly, We are here commanded to pray *without ceaſing*, conſequently, the *whole* Duty is commanded; *without ceaſing* cannot ſignify leſs than that we beſtow all the Time that we can in *Prayer*. Now, if we beſtow *all* the Time that we can afford to ſpend in *Prayer*, upon any *one*, or *more*, Parts of the Duty, and neglect the other Part, or Parts, which are, all, equally required, then we practiſe but a *Part* of our Duty, and leave the reſt undone by us. And

if

if God commands us in one Place of Scripture to beſtow *all* our Time upon a *Part*, and in other Places commands us to practiſe the *whole* Duty, then God's Commands contradict and deſtroy each other, and make our Obedience *impracticable*. I ſhall confirm this Acceptation of the Word by two Paſſages out of the *Pſalms* v. 2, 3. "O Hearken thou unto the Voice of my cal- "ling, my King, and my God, for unto thee "will I make my Prayer; my Voice ſhalt thou "hear betimes, O Lord; early in the Morning "will I direct my Prayer unto Thee, and will "look up." The Word is *general*; and it cannot, in common Senſe, be *limited* to any *particular Part* of the Duty, ſince it cannot be ſuppoſed that *David*, in his Addreſſes to God, *confined* himſelf to any one particular kind only. But, the Concluſion of the ſeventy-ſecond is more expreſs. It is there ſaid: *The Prayers of David, the Son of Jeſſe are ended.* Where, all the foregoing *Pſalms* are called Prayers; tho' ſome of them be doleful Complaints of the Sadneſs of his Condition; others of them Confeſſion of Sins; others Acknowledgements of his Dependence on God; others magnify his powerful and wiſe Goodneſs, and render Thanks for Benefits receiv'd, and promiſe dutiful Obedience for the future; by which we learn that *Prayer* is made up of all theſe, and is here us'd to include the Subject-matter of all our Addreſſes to God.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the Nature *of Prayer.*

I. PRAYER muſt be an Act of the *Soul*, of the *ſpiritual* and *rational* Part of us: If it were otherwiſe, it could not be a *religious* Act, which ſuppoſes it to be an Act of the *Underſtanding*; neither, indeed, could it be a *moral* and *human* Action, for That ſuppoſes two Things: Firſt, that it be *known to the Agent*; ſecondly, that it be *freely acted*. The Reader, I hope, will have Patience to wait for the Uſe that I intend to make of theſe Obſervations, which, at preſent may not appear to be ſo pertinent as he will find them to be. Firſt, I ſay, it muſt be *known to the Agent*, becauſe, otherwiſe, it cannot, in a *moral* Senſe, be called *his* Action, nor does it flow from *himſelf* as a *conſcious Principle* of Action. And, if it be not *freely* acted, it cannot be *imputed* to him, whether it be good, or bad. *Prayer*, therefore, muſt be performed by one that *knows* when *he prays*, and is *conſcious of what he does*; without which *Knowledge* and *Conſciouſneſs* a *Parrot* may pray, as well as a *Man*, foraſmuch as the *Bird* may be taught to utter the *Words* of a Prayer. *Freedom* of Action is, likewiſe, as neceſſary as *Knowledge* and *Conſciouſneſs*, becauſe, otherwiſe, a *muſical Inſtrument* may be ſaid to pray when it is made, as it may be made by a Performer, to utter articulate Sounds. It is the *Soul*, then, the *Thought* of the

the *Mind* that makes our Words Prayer. If he knows what he ſays, and *means*, and *wills* the doing it, this makes it an Action flowing from *himſelf*, and is truly and properly *Prayer*. If,

2. To this *Knowledge*, *Conſciouſneſs*, and *Intention* we add the *Direction of the Mind* while we *ſpeak the Words*. *Prayer* is *ſpeaking* to the Object of our Prayers, or *converſing* with him; but, unleſs the *Mind* be *directed* to him while the *Mouth* utters the Words, we *cannot* properly be ſaid to *ſpeak* to him, or *converſe* with him, the *Mouth* being only the *Soul*'s INSTRUMENT in Converſation. It is the *Soul*, only, that *converſes*, and its *Converſation* is, its being *directed* to the Object with whom it *converſes*. *David*, in the Words which I have already quoted, has rightly defined the *Nature* of *Prayer*. *I will* DIRECT *my Prayer unto thee, and will* LOOK UP. And, elſewhere, he ſpeaks of *lifting up* his Soul. This is what diſtinguiſhes *Prayer* from *Contemplation*, *Reading*, or *Hearing* the *Words* of Prayer. Tho' this neceſſary Diſtinction may be *quite new* to a great many of my Readers, the moſt ordinary Capacity may clearly underſtand it, if he will but obſerve how his *Mind*, as well as his *Voice*, is directed to a *Man* when he *ſpeaks* to him.

Before I proceed any farther in the *Chain* of my Work, I ſhall ſtop, to apply what I have ſaid concerning the *Nature* of Prayer, to the People of the *Church of England*, the *Diſſenters*, and the *Papiſts*.

Firſt, I would deſire thoſe of my Readers, who are of *the Church of England*, to recollect what has paſs'd in their Minds at their Devotions, whether in *publick*, or in *private*; comparing it with what I have above ſaid, concerning the *Nature* of that Action of the Mind which is properly *Prayer*, leſt they ſhould have miſtaken *hearing*, or *reading*, of Prayers, for *praying*; for, it is evident that a Man may be attentive to every Part of the Service which the Miniſter reads at *Church*, or he, himſelf, reads out of a Book in his *Cloſet*; and that he may feel himſelf very much affected with what he *hears*, or *reads*, and, yet never *pray* at all. In order to illuſtrate my Meaning, I ſhall inſtance in that Part of Prayer which we call *Confeſſion*; while the Miniſter is reading it, let the Congregation have in their Minds ever ſo diſtinct a View of the Force of every Branch of it; let them, at that Time, be poſſeſſed with the ſtrongeſt Senſe of their *Guilt*, and *Folly*; let the Paſſions of Self-indignation, Shame, and Fear, be ever ſo ſtrongly excited, and their Reſolutions of Amendment ever ſo firmly fixed, yet *all this* does not amount to *praying*, or *confeſſing*, any more than *hearing* a *Sermon*, or *reading* a *Diſcourſe* upon that Subject, with the ſame Affections, does. This Act of the Mind conſiſts in *addreſſing*, or *ſpeaking*, thoſe Thoughts to the Object of our Worſhip. If this *Addreſs* of the Mind be accompanied with a *Voice*, and *outward Geſtures*, we then, *ſpeak* to him in the ſame manner that we ſpeak to *one another*; but, as the Object of

our Worſhp is always *preſent* to our Minds, and *privy* to all our Thoughts, we may *ſpeak* to him by an *internal Direction* of our *Souls*, without the Help of the *Organs of Speech*, or of *bodily Geſtures*; but, without this *Direction*, or *Addreſs* of the *Mind*, which is properly, *ſpeaking*, we cannot be ſaid to *confeſs* our Sins, but only to *think* of them. And thus it is with regard to every other Part of Prayer. It is very difficult to make myſelf underſtood by common Readers, who are unaccuſtomed to *Diſtinctions* of this kind, or, indeed of any other; but, I expreſs myſelf as intelligibly as I can; and the Subject is of ſuch Importance that it deſerves their moſt ſerious Attention, and Conſideration, in order to know whether they have *really* performed the Duty of *Prayer*, or only *ſeemed* to have done it; for, upon the *Propriety* of their *Performance* muſt, in a great meaſure, depend the *Succeſs* of it.

In anſwer to this, it may be objected, that the *Congregation*, by ſaying *Amen*, at the end of every Collect do as effectually make the *whole* their *own*; and that by *directing* their Minds to God while they repeat *that Word*, they may be as truly ſaid to have offered up *every Part* of it, as if they had offered up every Part of it along with the *Miniſter:* But, this I muſt utterly deny. They do, indeed, thereby publickly declare to the *People* their *Approbation* of the whole, and offer up to *God* the *whole* Collect *together*; but it is not the ſame thing as if they had *ſo* joined with the *Miniſter* in *every Part* of the Collect, as to have *offer'd up* every Part of it in their

own

own Minds (by ſuch *a Direction* of them as I have been ſpeaking of) *at the ſame Time* that the Miniſter ſpoke the Words; neither can ſuch a *general* Offering up the *whole*, after the Miniſter has done, have the *ſame Effect* upon the Minds of the *People*, as if they had, all along, *joined* with *him* in a *particular* Direction of every *Part* of it to God, at the *ſame Time* that *he* did. To illuſtrate this, let us ſuppoſe the Congregation, *knowing*, and *remembring*, *every Part* of a Collect, not to attend to it while the *Miniſter* is *reading*, but to think of ſomething elſe till he has read the *whole*, and then to ſay *Amen*; I aſk, would this be *as truly*, and *effectually*, offering up to God *every Part* of it *in their own Minds*, as if they had *joined* with him in a particular Direction of their Minds to God, thro' *every* Part of it at the ſame Time *with him*; yet, ſaying *Amen*, at the end of thoſe Collects which we do not *repeat* after the *Miniſter*, is neceſſary in order to *publiſh* our having *mentally* joined in every Part of it.

2. It is poſſible that this Diſcourſe may chance to fall into the Hands of ſome of the *Diſſenters*; and, if it ſhould, with the utmoſt Benevolence and *Chriſtian Affection* I intreat them ſeriouſly to apply what I have ſaid to *themſelves*; hoping, that they will have Integrity and Wiſdom enough to lay aſide all manner of Prejudice, and weigh this important Affair with the Impartiality which it deſerves. It is very far from my Intention to be any ways affrontive or provoking, (and let the Reader remember this in every Part of my Book, where

where I may have Occaſion to mention the *Diſſenters*) but *Juſtice* to the *Subject*, and *Charity* to *them*, oblige me to declare plainly that, in my Opinion, it is *abſolutely impoſſible* for any of the *Diſſenters*, beſides their *Teachers*, properly to *pray* in their *Meetings*, or in their *Families*; they only *hear* Prayers, in the very ſame manner as they *hear* the *Sermon*. We, of the *Church of England*, having a *Form* of Prayer, the *Congregation* may, if they pleaſe, make themſelves thoroughly acquainted with all the Parts of it, and knowing, beforehand, what the Miniſter is going to ſay, they may accompany him all along, and while *he* pronounces the *Words*, they may, at the *ſame time*, *direct* their Thoughts to God, and by that means make it *their* Prayer, as well as the *Miniſter*'s; and both *theirs* and *his* a *joint* Prayer; but, a *Diſſenting Teacher* offers up a Prayer of his own private Conception, unknown, beforehand, to his Congregation; and, therefore, their Minds muſt conſtantly be employed in attending to what he is going to ſay, and in judging of it; and, conſequently, never can have time, *themſelves*, to offer up to God, by the Direction of their *own Minds*, any Part of *his* Prayer; much leſs can the *Miniſter* and the *People* offer up the *ſame Prayer*, at the *ſame Time*, becauſe *he* muſt actually have offer'd up every Part of it before they can tell what he will ſay.

3. As this is a Matter of very great Importance, I ſhall conclude this Part with a *joint* Application to *Church* People and *Diſſenters*. It is really ſtrange

ſtrange that ſo groundleſs a Conceit ſhould ever enter into Mens Heads, as that *hearing* another pray ſhould be *praying*. And yet, it is manifeſt, from daily Experience, that the Generality of Mankind *do* think that they *pray* when they only hear *another* pray: Whereas (as I have obſerved) unleſs I ſpeak to God, *myſelf*; unleſs *my own Soul* diſcourſes with him, I cannot be ſaid to *pray*. Suppoſe, for inſtance, I ſhould be in a Room when two Perſons are *diſcourſing together*, and ſhould hear all that they ſaid, but did not ſay one Word *myſelf*; ſurely, nobody could be ſo ſenſeleſs as to imagine that I diſcourſed with either of thoſe Perſons to whom I did not utter one Syllable. Even ſo, if I ſhould be in a *Church*, or a *Meeting-houſe*, and hear the *Miniſter* diſcourſe *with*, or ſpeak *to* God, that is, *pray* to him, either by a *written* Form, or a *precompoſed*, or *extemporary* Prayer of the *Miniſter*'s own drawing up; I ſay, I, *myſelf*, could not be ſaid to *pray*, unleſs I directed thoſe Thoughts to God which the Words expreſſed. Whereas, alas! if People be preſent in a Place of *publick* Worſhip; if they feel themſelves affected with the Subject-matter of the Prayer, with the Voice, or Delivery, of the *Reader*, or *Speaker*; if any of theſe things have ſuggeſted pious Sentiments, and excited pious Diſpoſitions, then they fanſy that they have been *praying*, all that time, with great Devotion. But this is a mere Deluſion; for, do but conſider a little. I may be very much affected with the *hearing* of a melancholy Story, and not *ſpeak* that Story *myſelf*; and I do not

ſpeak

ſpeak it unleſs my *Mind* be *directed* to the Perſon to *whom* I would ſpeak. I may be mov'd with a Man's Complaint of his own, or another Perſon's Misfortunes, and yet not make that Complaint, *myſelf*; and all the Actions of the *other* Party cannot be called *mine*, becauſe I never *made* them ſo, by *ſpeaking* the Words, *myſelf*, either *vocally*, or *mentally*. Thus it is in the caſe of *Prayer*. I may be deeply touched by hearing the *Miniſter* bewail his own, and other Mens Sins, and importunately beg for Mercy, and Forgiveneſs, and yet, not make *his* Confeſſion *mine*, for want of that *Direction* of my *own Mind*, without which it cannot be Prayer, becauſe it is not *ſpeaking* to God, or *diſcourſing* with him. I have taken the more Pains to make this eſſential Matter ſo plain, becauſe it has not been often explained, and is little underſtood by common Readers.

4. But, the Caſe of the *Papiſts*, with regard to their *publick Prayers*, is infinitely worſe than that of our common *Church* People, or the *Diſſenters* from our *eſtabliſhed Worſhip*. Indeed, I think I have proved very fairly that the *Diſſenters*, not knowing beforehand what the *Miniſter* will ſay in his Prayer, can never make *his* Prayer *theirs* while *he* is praying, much leſs make it *jointly with* him, and cannot properly be ſaid ever to *pray*, either in their *Meetings*, or in their *Family* Devotions; yet, they may *edify* by *hearing* their *Miniſter* pray, juſt as they may edify by his *Sermons*, or by reading a *good Book*. Their Judgments may be informed, their Paſſions

ſions excited, and ſuch Impreſſions left upon their Minds, as may be productive of good Fruits: But, it is impoſſible for the *illiterate* People of the *Romiſh* Communion, either to *join* in their publick Prayers, or to be in the leaſt *edified* by them, becauſe they cannot *underſtand* them; neither can a Perſon who prays in a Tongue which he does not *underſtand*, be, properly, ſaid to *pray* at all: For, as I have already proved, *praying* to any Perſon is, *ſpeaking* to him, or *converſing* with him; but *ſpeaking* to any Perſon, or *converſing* with him, is communicating, or expreſſing, our *Thoughts* to him. But, what *Ideas*, what *Thoughts*, can any one have in his Mind when he ſpeaks he does not know *what?* The *Words* may contain very proper *Sentiments*, but they cannot be *his* Sentiments, becauſe they are, to *him*, NO Sentiments at all, for want of underſtanding the Meaning of the *Words* which expreſs them. This, I am ſure, was *St. Paul*'s Opinion (1 *Cor.* xiv. 16.) "How, ſays the Apo-"ſtle, ſhall he that occupieth the Room of the "*unlearned*, (that is, how ſhall the *unlearned* "Perſon, who does not know what thou ſpeak-"eſt in a *ſtrange* Language) ſay *Amen* at thy "giving of Thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth "not what thou ſayeſt; for thou verily giveſt "Thanks well, but the other is not edified." And this he calls *ſpeaking into the Air*; that is, *to no purpoſe*. Wherefore in the Opinion of this *inſpired* Writer, a Man muſt *underſtand* what is ſaid in Prayer, or he cannot make it his *own* Prayer by ſaying *Amen* to it. Neither is it poſ-

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ſible that ſuch an Action as this, where neither the *Underſtanding*, nor the *Affections*; neither the *Head*, nor the *Heart* are concerned, ſhould have any Effect towards anſwering any of the *Ends* of Prayer. From whence appears the groſs Corruption of the *Latin* Service of the Church of *Rome*. For, ſuppoſe that the *Prieſt* does underſtand what he ſays, and conſequently does truly *pray*; yet, he prays *alone*, and all the *illiterate* Part of the Congregation ſtand like *Ideots*, either hearing him ſpeak, or ſpeaking, themſelves, ſuch Words as they do not underſtand a Syllable of; and, therefore do not *pray* at all: So that the great *Chriſtian* Duty of worſhipping God in *publick Aſſemblies*, is rendered *impracticable* by the *common* People; *God* loſes his *Honour*, and the poor deluded Wretches loſe the Opportunity of performing a moſt neceſſary, and comfortable Service. We have, indeed, Reaſon to hope, and believe, that tho' they are ſo unhappy as to loſe the preſent Advantages, and Satisfaction of diſcharging their Duty, their *invincible Ignorance* is excuſable; but, for their *Rulers*—, who *introduced*, and continue this infamous Corruption, the *largeſt Charity* can do no more than recommend them to the infinite Mercies of God. But, what infinite Reaſon have *we*, WE of the CHURCH OF ENGLAND, more eſpecially, to be thankful to *God*'s *Goodneſs*, as for other Parts *of the Reformation*, ſo particularly for giving us the beſt Opportunity, and the beſt Means, of performing towards him the very beſt, that is, the moſt *reaſonable* Service;

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of offering up such *joint* publick Prayers as do truly deserve that Name! May we all be as thankful for these Blessings, and as diligent in the Use, as we are happy in the Enjoyment, of them; or our Ingratitude will be an Aggravation of our Guilt in neglecting them.

Having distinctly consider'd the *Nature* of Prayer, and shewn wherein it *differs* from *Contemplation*; the next Thing to be consider'd is, the proper *Object* of our Prayers.—Under which Head I do not intend to give an *historical Account*, much less a *Confutation* of all the several *Kinds* of *Idolatry* that have been practis'd among *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Christians*, but only to enquire how far all *invisible Creatures*, as such, are excluded from being proper *Objects* of our Prayers.

CHAP III.

Concerning the Object *of Prayer.*

PRAYER, as I have shewn, is that Act of the Mind by which we *address* our Thoughts, *direct*, or *speak*, them to another Being. This we, *Men*, are capable of doing to one another, either to ask the Assistance of each other, to acknowledge the Receipt of Benefits, or to express the good Opinion which we entertain of one another. And all this is very right while we keep within proper Bounds; that is, while we do not *ask* any thing of a *Man* which none but *God* can give, as the King of *Assyria* did when

when he ſent his *General* to the King of *Iſrael* to be *miraculouſly* cured of his *Leproſy*, as our Lord cured his Diſciples by a Word of his Mouth; or thank him for Bleſſings in ſuch a Manner as implies a Denial of God's being the great Governour of the World, and the original Fountain of all human Bleſſings; or aſcribe ſuch Perfections to him, either in *Kind*, or *Degree*, as belong only to the *Deity*; as in the Caſe of *Herod*, when the People, in Compliment to him for an eloquent Speech, ſaid, it was the Voice of a *God*, and not of a *Man*. But, all *inviſible Creatures*, are *naturally* incapable Objects of our *Addreſſes*, or *Prayers*, of any kind. I call any Being *naturally* an *incapable* Object of our Addreſſes, which is of ſuch Nature, and in ſuch Circumſtances, that it is impoſſible for us to know whether it will be to *any purpoſe* to addreſs ourſelves to it. Let us, then, conſider how this Matter ſtands with regard to *inviſible Creatures*. In the firſt place, All *Creatures* being of a *limited* Nature, it is impoſſible for us to know whether any *inviſible* Creature be *preſent* with us when we addreſs ourſelves to it. Archbiſhop *Tenniſon*, in his learned Treatiſe on *Idolatry*, obſerves, that the Power of God being *infinite*, we cannot know but that he may be able to create a Being that may be *every where*, as well as in any *particular* Place. Strictly ſpeaking, this is true: But, then, with Reverence to his Grace's Character, I muſt obſerve that even *Omnipotence* can create but *one* ſuch Being, becauſe it ſeems, to *my* Apprehenſion, that *two created*

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Beings cannot be in the *ſame Place*, at the *ſame Time*; whereas the Scriptures aſſure us that there are *Multitudes* of inviſible ſpiritual Subſtances ſurrounding us, and frequently changing their Situation. It is the *Prerogative* of *God* to be able to *pervade* other Beings, or to be, at the ſame Time, in the very ſame Place, with any other Being; conſequently, tho' there might, as far as we can tell, have been a *Creature* made capable of being *every where* preſent, yet we are aſſur'd, from there being *more* Creatures than *one*, that there can be no ſuch *Creature* as an *omnipreſent* one: I mention this only as a Matter of *curious Speculation*, not as a Point of *Conſequence*: For, if it *were* poſſible in Nature, we could not poſſibly *know* that there *actually is* ſuch a one, there being no ſuch Truth *revealed* to us by God. On the contrary, the Scripture makes mention of no other *omnipreſent* Being but the *Deity*, and always mentions *his* Omnipreſence as *peculiar* to *Himſelf*. *Solomon*, in his Prayer of Dedication, ſays to God, *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, much leſs this Houſe.* And God ſays of himſelf, *Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footſtool. Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off.* The Pſalmiſt moſt elegantly, as well as fully, expreſſes his *Immenſity*, or *Omnipreſence*,—"Whither ſhall I go from "thy Spirit, or whither ſhall I go from thy Pre- "ſence? If I aſcend up into Heaven, thou art "there; if I go down into Hell, thou art there "alſo; if I take the Wings of the Morning, "and remain in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea,

"even

"even there alſo ſhall thy Hand lead me." There are variety of Paſſages in the Scriptures of the old and new Teſtament to the ſame purpoſe, all of them ſetting forth God's *Immenſity*, or *Omnipreſence*. And it is neceſſarily implied, in the Nature of Things, that when God gives a *particular* Account of his *natural Attributes*, it muſt be by way of *Diſtinction*, and that what he ſays of his *own* Nature cannot be ſaid of his *Creatures*. As to *us*, *Men*, we know that we are, all, *limited*, and can occupy but a ſmall Part of Space at one Time; and, conſequently, the greateſt *Saint* that ever lived, after he is *dead* continues to be *as limited* as when he was *alive*, and can occupy no more Space. As to the *Angels*, we are aſſured that *they* are not only *limited*, like *Men*, but perpetually *changing* their Situation; ſo that when the *Papiſts* pray to any *Saint*, or *Angel*, it is impoſſible for them to know whether the Being to whom they pray be at that Time *preſent* with them.

But, ſuppoſing we were able to tell when any particular *Saint*, or *Angel*, is *preſent* with us, it could not be *privy* to our *Thoughts*, and, conſequently, all ſuch *Prayers*, or *Addreſſes* of the Mind, could be of no manner of Signification; and that *Saints* and *Angels* cannot know our *Thoughts*, we are as certain as we are that the Scriptures are true; for, they expreſſly declare, that it is *God* that ſeeth in *Secret* and is privy to the *Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*. *Solomon*, in particular, ſays, not only that *God knoweth* our Thoughts, but that he *alone* is capable of

doing it, 1 *Kings* viii. 39. And God's Ability to know the *Secrets* of our *Hearts* is a neceſſary Inference which the Scriptures draw from his having *created* us. *Underſtand, ye brutiſh,* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *He that planted the Ear ſhall not he hear, he that made the Eye ſhall not he ſee?* Then it follows, *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Men.* The ſame Inference *God* draws from his *Omnipreſence*; *Am I God at hand, and not afar off:* From whence he infers, *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret Places that I ſhall not ſee him.* And, therefore, as it is *God only* that is every where preſent, and privy to our Thoughts, *he only* is a capable Object of our religious Addreſſes. The Worſhip of *Saints* and *Angels* is full as ſenſeleſs and ridiculous as any of the *Heathen Idolatry.* The Holy Scriptures frequently deride the Worſhippers of thoſe Deities, which wanted the Perfections neceſſary to render them *capable* Objects of Worſhip. It was a bitter Taunt to the Prieſts of *Baal,* when *Elijah* bad them *cry aloud, for your God is either talking, or purſuing, or on a Journey, or, peradventure, he ſleepeth, and muſt be awaked.* So when a *Papiſt* prays to a *Saint,* or an *Angel,* he knows not but that the Object of his Worſhip may at that Time be at a vaſt Diſtance from him, or, if preſent, as ignorant of what is ſaid to him, as *Baal* was of the Prayers of his Worſhippers; unleſs God has told them that he will always make known to *Saints* and *Angels,* ſuch Addreſſes as are made to them by Men. But where do they find any Directions in Scripture to tell any of them to *what* Saint,

Saint, or Angel, any of them ſhall pray, with an Aſſurance that God will communicate to that Saint, or Angel, ſuch Addreſſes?

But, ſuppoſe God were continually to make known to *Saints* and *Angels* the Petitions that are made to them from *Earth*, even *this* would not make them *capable Objects* of our Prayers; for, unleſs they be capable of *anſwering* Petitions, what will their knowing our Wants ſignify to us? And it is impoſſible that they *ſhould* be able to ſupply all our Wants, without being *omniſcient*, and *omnipotent*; without *Omniſcience*, they cannot tell whether what we aſk of them be *good* for us, or *how* our Wants may be ſupplied. Without *Omnipotence*, they cannot always be able to put their good Deſigns in Execution. They muſt be able to ſee all the *preſent* bad Deſigns of *evil Spirits*, and *evil Men*, againſt us. They muſt be able to *foreſee* all the *future* Intentions and Actions of *free* Agents. They muſt likewiſe be able to controul and over-rule them; and, I preſume, there is not a *Papiſt* of common Senſe who believes that *Saints* and *Angels* have ſuch Powers as theſe; which, yet are abſolutely requiſite towards making them *capable* Objects of their Prayers. How, then, can they act ſo abſurdly, and impertinently, as to pray to Beings which they muſt know, and acknowledge, to be *incapable* of *helping* them? And, yet, that they do pray to *Saints* and *Angels* is undeniable. At preſent, indeed, their Maſſes are not publickly uſed among us; and, therefore we cannot have daily experimental

Evidence of this Fact; but, all Persons, who know any thing of *Popery*, must know that the *Papists do* publickly pray to *Saints* and *Angels* in their Churches: Nay, they have made the Doctrine of praying to *Saints* and *Angels* an Article of their *Faith*, and, in their Opinion, necessary to Salvation; and they refuse Communion with, and positively condemn, all those who will not profess their Belief of this Article of their *Trent* Creed. Nay, they not only *pray* to them, but they pray to them with all the same Circumstances of *religious Honour*, and *Worship*, with which they pray to *God* and *Christ*; and pray to *them* together with *God* and *Christ* as *joint Objects* of Worship: This might easily be proved from their *publick Forms* of Prayer; but this does not so properly fall within my present Plan; which was, to shew that *Saints*, and *Angels*, as *Creatures* of a *finite* and *limited* Nature, are not capable Objects of our *Addresses* of *any* sort, because they can neither know what we pray for, nor are capable of answering our Prayers. If any one is desirous of receiving farther Satisfaction on this Head, I refer him to three most excellent Sermons of Archbishop *Tillotson* upon *one God*, and *one Mediator between God* and *Man*, &c. in the 1st *Folio* Volume of his *posthumous* Works.

But, though *Saints* and *Angels* are not capable of *hearing*, or *answering* our Prayers, by Virtue of their *own* Knowledge and Power, yet, the *Papists* pretend that God may *reveal* to *Saints* and *Angels* what we ask of them, and

enable

enable them to grant our Petitions. God, it ſeems, *may* do this if he pleaſes, and therefore they pray to Saints and Angels without knowing whether he *will* be pleaſed to do it, or not. Is it not more reaſonable to argue after this Manner: We do not know (the Scriptures being quite ſilent about it) that *Saints* and *Angels* do know what we ſay to them, or are able to grant what we aſk of them, and therefore we will not offer to pray to them, for want of a ſufficient Warrant from Reaſon, or Scripture, becauſe ſuch a Practice would be a fooliſh one? I ſhall illuſtrate it by putting a familiar Caſe. Suppoſe that we in *England* ſhould aſk any thing of the *Emperor* of *China*, tho' it is *naturally* impoſſible for the Emperor to hear what we ſay to him, or be capable of aſſiſting us, unleſs God *reveals* it to him, and *enables* him to grant it; I ſay, ſuppoſe we ſhould pray to him only becauſe God *can* do all this, when we have no Grounds of Aſſurance that God *will* do it; in this Caſe would any Man pretend to *talk*, or *converſe*, with the Emperor at ſo great a Diſtance from us, as if he were preſent with us, or we were ſure that he knew what we ſaid to him, and could ſupply our Wants? The Parallel between this and the Caſe of praying to *Saints* and *Angels* is ſo obvious, that I need not ſtay to draw it: But, to obviate this Difficulty, the *Papiſts* have found out a very great *Secret*, viz. that *Saints* and *Angels*, having the *beatific Viſion of God*, ſee all Things in him, and, conſequently know *when* we pray to them, *what* we pray to them for, and whether our Prayers be fit to be offered. Now, in the firſt

place, as to *Saints*, we, knowing nothing of the *Hearts* of Men, cannot tell *who* are *Saints*, or who are *hypocritical Sinners*, and may pray to them under a Perſuaſion of their being in the more *immediate Preſence* of God, while they are among the *Wicked* in *Darkneſs* and *Deſpair*; and, therefore before the *Papiſts* pray to any of the *Saints*, they ſhould pray to *God* that he would be pleas'd to tell them whether the Perſon to whom they are going to pray be *really* a *Saint* in *Heaven*, or a *Sinner* in *Hell*: Beſides, the *Scripture* is ſilent about this Glaſs, in which the *Saints* ſee all things. And, if this be the Caſe, we need not go ſo far about, but may better go directly to the Throne of Grace, according to the Direction of *Scripture*, and aſk for what we want, with a firm Reliance on *Chriſt*'s Promiſe, that whatever we aſk *in his Name* will be granted, provided it be fit for us, and we worthy of it.

Before I ſhut up this Head, concerning the *proper Object* of our Prayers, I muſt obſerve, that our Bleſſed *Saviour*, the *Man Chriſt Jeſus*, tho' a *Creature* of a *limited Nature*, and now reſident in Heaven, is a *capable* Object of our Prayers, becauſe he is *God*, as well as *Man*. As the *reaſonable Soul and Body are one Man*, ſo *God* and *Man* are ONE CHRIST: And, by Virtue of this Union of the *divine* and *human* Nature in his Perſon, he has all thoſe eſſential Perfections which make him a *capable Object* of Prayer; ſuch as *Omnipreſence*, *Omniſcience*, and *Omnipotence*; but, if he were a *mere Creature*, he would be as *incapable* an Object of

Prayer as any *other invisible* Creature, becauſe he could be no more capable of *hearing*, or *anſwering*, our Prayers, than *Saints* and *Angels* are, without a *particular Revelation*, and a *ſupernatural Aſſiſtance*, from *God*, of which the Scripture ſays not a Syllable: And, yet, the Scriptures plainly repreſent CHRIST as the *Object* of *Prayer*, and relate the Prayers that the Saints offered to him. Thus, *Acts* vii. 59, 60. *They ſtoned Stephen* calling upon God, *and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit; and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud Voice, Lord lay not this Sin to their Charge.* In theſe Words St. *Stephen* is expreſſly ſaid to pray unto *Jeſus Chriſt*; conſequently, in the Opinion of that *inſpired Martyr*, *Jeſus Chriſt* is the *Object* of *Prayer*, and *truly God*. As from his *Divinity* we can prove him to be a *capable Object* of our *Prayers*, ſo we may argue, *backward*, from his being *a capable Object of our Prayers*, to his being *God*; and if he be *God*, he muſt be the *one God*, ſince the Scriptures know of no *other* God, but the *one ſupreme* God; and of no other *Worſhip*, but what is due to the *one ſupreme* God. A *ſubordinate Worſhip*, to a *ſubordinate God*, to a CREATURE *God*, is a Doctrine of *modern Invention*. A CREATURE *God*, an omnipreſent, omniſcient, omnipotent *Creature*, is the *ſtrangeſt Creature* that ever was heard of, as great a Stranger to *common Senſe*, as it is to the *Bible*, and a much *greater Myſtery* than the Doctrine of the *Trinity*.

So plain a Caſe as this is needs no *Authority* to confirm it, but I ſhall cite a Paſſage in the Sermons,

Sermons, above mentioned, of Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*, not only as it is a Vindication of what I have advanced; but as it is a Vindication of that excellent Man from the Charge of *Arianiſm*, after his having publiſh'd four Sermons profeſſedly in proof of *Chriſt*'s *Divinity*. The Paſſage is at p. 135. "If *Chriſt* be only a *Man*, how can "he be preſent every where, to thoſe that call "upon him; ſince this is not the Nature of "*Man*, but *God*, to be able to be preſent every "where? If *Chriſt* be only a *Man*, why do we "call upon him as *Mediator*; ſince Prayer to a "*Man* is deemed ineffectual to ſave us? If "*Chriſt* be only a *Man*, why do we put our "Hope in him; ſince Hope in *Man* is accurſed "in Scripture?" At p. 140, there is another Paſſage, that, by neceſſary Inference, proves *Chriſt's Divinity*: "Praying to them (*Saints and* "*Angels*) in all Places, and at all Times, and "for all ſorts of Bleſſings, does ſuppoſe them to "have the incommunicable Perfections of the "divine Nature imparted to them, or inherent "in them, *viz.* his *Omnipreſence*, *Omniſcience*, "and *Omnipotence*; and to whatever Being we "aſcribe theſe Perfections, in doing ſo, we make "it God." We, therefore, being commanded to pray to *Chriſt* in all Places, and at all Times, and for all ſorts of Bleſſings, this is a plain Declaration of his *truly divine* Nature: And it is for want of theſe *divine* Perfections that St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*, abſolutely *forbids* praying to *Angels*; and if not to *Angels*, much leſs to *Saints*.

I hope, I have made it plain that *God* ONLY, the *one ſupreme* God, is a *capable Object* of Prayer, becauſe *he* ONLY is *omnipreſent*, *omniſcient*, and *omnipotent*; but it does not follow, that, becauſe he is *capable*, at all Times, and in all Places, to hear, and anſwer all the Prayers of all his Creatures, therefore he *permits*, much leſs *requires*, us, to pray to him, ſince he knows, without our telling him, all our Wants, and is diſpoſed, by his Goodneſs, to ſupply them, as far as is conſiſtent with his Wiſdom, without our aſking him. His *Will* in this Caſe cannot be proved by his *bare Capacity* to be prayed to, but muſt be grounded upon ſome other Conſideration, drawn either from *our Nature*, or his *expreſs Command*. Next, therefore, I proceed to enquire *how* we can diſcover it to be the *Will* of *God* that we *ſhould* pray to him.

CHAP IV.

Concerning our Obligations to the Duty of Prayer.

I ſay, the Proof of our Obligation to pray to God *Reaſon* muſt deduce from *his Nature*, and *ours*; or be built upon his *expreſs Command*, contained in ſome *external Revelation*. As for what relates to the Proof of the Duty from the *Nature* of *God*, the *Nature* of *Man*, and the *Nature* of the *Duty*, I cannot ſtate that Matter in a clearer Light, than in the following Letters that paſſed on this Occaſion, between a very learned and ingenious Divine, the late Mr.

Joseph Clarke of *Long-Ditton*, and myself, and therefore I shall here publish them.

To the Reverend Mr. Joseph Clarke.

Sir,

'AS you are justly allow'd to have an excellent metaphysical Genius, and very minutely to have consider'd the *Nature*, *Relation*, and *Fitness* of Things, with the *moral Obligations* arising from them, I should be much oblig'd to you, and our learned Friend Mr. *Harvest*, for your Sentiments upon a Subject of Consequence, that I would examine with all possible Accuracy. I want a Proof of the Duty of *Prayer* from *natural* Principles. I have read a good deal upon the Subject, and must be of Opinion that very eminent Writers have us'd very inconclusive Arguments, which in the Consequence must always do more hurt than good. It has ever been an establish'd Maxim with me, that *Truth* can never be serv'd by *Error*, neither can it ever stand in need of such *false* Friends to support it. They always give an Advantage to the Enemy, by bringing a Discredit upon the Cause which they attempt to serve. Whenever the *Inconclusiveness* of such Arguments are detected and exposed (and there will always be *Infidels* able and ready to do it) it staggers weak Minds, and brings a *Distrust* upon the *clearest* Arguments, which will either hinder a fair Examination, or give a wrong Bias to the Judgment, and occasion them to imagine that a thing is not capable of

being

'being proved at all, becauſe *thoſe* Arguments do 'not prove it. The Thing to be prov'd is this, 'viz. That *Prayer* is a Duty, not only as it is a 'natural Means of *Religion* and *Virtue*, (which 'I think capable of Demonſtration) but in *it-'ſelf*, and for *its own* ſake; a Duty ariſing 'from the *Nature* of *Man*, and of the *Deity*; 'from *us*, as *dependent* ſinful Beings, to *him*, as 'the *Creator*, *Preſerver* and *Judge* of the World. 'This, I ſay, is the Point to be prov'd: This 'is what eminent Men have publickly attempted 'to prove, but not to *my* Satisfaction, nor the 'Conviction of *Infidels*. If any Body can do it, '*you* and *he* can; and by doing of it you may 'not only gratify the Curioſity of an old, inqui-'ſitive Friend, but do publick Service to Reli-'gion and to Mankind. I am,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

W. WEBSTER.

To the Reverend Dr. WEBSTER.

Sir,

'I ſhould have anſwer'd the Favour of yours, 'which now lies before me of *Octob.* 21, 'by the Time you deſired; but was prevented, 'by being obliged to be abſent from home, 'till Yeſterday; therefore hope you will excuſe 'the Neglect. I cannot preſume to think myſelf 'able to give you the Satisfaction you deſire, in 'a Matter which others, ſo much better quali-

'fied,

'fied, have not ſucceded in; and, what is more,
'a Matter wherein you ſeem to diſtruſt yourſelf,
'who (without a Compliment) I think capable
'of doing as much upon all Subjects, as any
'one; but yet I cannot diſpenſe with myſelf,
'from venturing to give you my Thoughts upon
'the Queſtion you propoſe; that I may not,
'by a Refuſal, render myſelf unworthy of the
'Honour you do me, in thinking them worth
'your knowing; though I ſhould perhaps better
'conſult my own Advantage, by being ſilent.

'The Thing you want to ſee proved is, if
'I miſtake not, contain'd in the following Pro-
'poſition, *viz.*

'The Act of Prayer, either for *Spirituals*, or
'*Temporals*, from Man to the ſupreme Being, is
'a *Duty* of *natural Morality*; or the *Obligation*
'to which, is *founded in*, and *will ariſe ſimply*
'*from*, the *natural Relation* and *Fitneſs of Things*.

'What has occurr'd to me in thinking upon
'it, is as follows:

'*That Act*, to which Man, *ſimply*, as a *ra-*
'*tional Agent*, is *obliged from the natural Rela-*
'*tion and Fitneſs of Things*; will be to him a
'*Duty*, *founded in*, and *ariſing ſimply from*, ſuch
'*Relation and Fitneſs*.

'I know it is always urged by thoſe who are
'againſt the Scheme of *Obligation from Fitneſs*,
'*&c.* that there can be no *Obligation* without a
'*Law*; and no *Law* without *Sanctions* annex'd.
'This I have always looked upon as a moſt pi-
'tiful Logomachy; as if the *Law of Reaſon*,
'were not as much a *Law*, to *rational Agents*,

'as

‘ as any Law whatever ; or as if the *Reaſon of*
‘ *Things* were not a *Law*, becauſe, forſooth, it
‘ is conſider'd as having, as ſuch, no *Sanctions*
‘ annex'd : But *ſurely* ſuch *Sanctions* do not
‘ *make* any thing *more a Law*, than it would
‘ be without them. They may be uſeful, or
‘ neceſſary, to *enforce* the Law, and to procure
‘ a more *regular Obedience* to it ; but where the
‘ Law is founded in *Reaſon*, it wants no other
‘ Sanctions to *make* it a *Law*, or *obligatory*, to
‘ all *rational Agents :* It is ſo in itſelf, and as
‘ ſuch ; and the *Sanctions* annex'd, are only *ex-*
‘ *trinſic Appendages*, and enter not neceſſarily into
‘ the Idea of a rational *Law*, or its *Obligation* as
‘ ſuch : And whoever will ſay, that *Sanctions*
‘ annex'd, are what only *make Morality obliga-*
‘ *tory* upon a *moral Agent*, may as well ſay, that
‘ the *Sanctions make it Morality* ; for ſurely, there
‘ is not more Difficulty in conceiving a *moral* Law
‘ *obligatory* without *Sanctions*, than in conceiving
‘ *Morality* without *Obligation*.—But this by the
‘ way—They who do not like the Word *Law*,
‘ may change it, without any Detriment to the
‘ Queſtion : For call it a *Rule of Action* ; and
‘ then I apprehend that a *rational Agent*, is as
‘ much *obliged*, as ſuch, *i. e. morally obliged*, to
‘ *act* by the *Rule of Reaſon*, that is, to *act as* a
‘ *rational Agent*, or *as what he is*, as if it were
‘ a *Law*, guarded by a thouſand Sanctions.

‘ Man then, being a *rational Agent*, is, ſim-
‘ ply, and as ſuch, *morally obliged* to act by the
‘ Law, or *Rule* of *natural Reaſon* ; and what-
‘ ever he is *ſo obliged* to, is thereby his *Duty*,

‘ *founded*

'*founded in*, and *arising from*, the *natural Re-*
'*lation* and *Fitness of Things*; which is that
'Rule or Law.

'The present Question then is, whether the
'*Act of Prayer*, from Man to the supreme Being,
'be an Act to which he is, *simply*, *as a rational*
'*Agent*, *obliged* from the *natural Relation and*
'*Fitness of Things.*

'Now, Man is a Being *sensible* of the many
'and various *Wants* and *Necessities*, whether
'*Temporal*, or *Spiritual*, to which he is by his
'*Nature liable.* He is *dependent* upon the su-
'preme Being, as his Creator and Preserver, for
'the *Supply of such Wants*; and in whose *Power*
'and *Will alone* it is to grant, or not to grant,
'such Supplies.—Will it now from hence fol-
'low, that Man, as a *sensible*, *dependent*, *rational*
'*Agent*, is *oblig'd*, as such, simply, and from
'the *natural Relation* and *Fitness of Things*, to
'*apply* to that Being, in whose Power and Will
'alone it is to grant such Supplies? Does there
'not seem to be as *natural a Connection*, *Relation*,
'and *Fitness*, between *Want*, *Dependence*, &c.
'and *Application* to him on whom *that Depen-*
'*dence is*, and in whose *Power* and *Will* the
'*Supply of such Wants are*; as there is between
'any moral Fitnesses whatever?—I don't mean
'a Fitness of *Means to an End* merely, but a *Fit-*
'*ness of Congruity*, a Fitness *in se*, arising from
'the natural *Relation* between God and Man.

'May it not be farther argued, that Man,
'being a Creature thus *dependent*; all such Ac-
'tions, Conduct and Behaviour, which are *ex-*

'*pressive*

'*preſſive* of an *Acknowledgement* of *ſuch Depen-*
'*dence*, are, as a rational dependent Agent,
'Parts of his *moral Duty*, ariſing ſimply from
'the natural *Relation* and *Fitneſs of Things?* Is
'there not a *natural Fitneſs of Action*, between
'ſuch a *dependent State*, and the *Acknowledgment*
'of it? *i. e.* Is not ſuch a dependent, rational
'Agent, *obliged*, ſimply, as ſuch, by the *Rule*
'*of Reaſon*, that is, by the *Rule of Fitneſs*, to
'*acknowledge* himſelf to be, by his Conduct and
'Behaviour, *what he is*; and would not a contrary
'Conduct be acting *counter* to the *natural Rela-*
'*tion*, which ſuch a dependent, rational Agent
'bears to him, on whom he is ſo dependent?
'Is not the *Act of Prayer* therefore, or ſuch
'an Act of Application, (being one of the
'ſtrongeſt *Means of ſuch Acknowledgement*, as
'is before mention'd) an Action whoſe *ſimple*
'*Fitneſs* is founded in the Nature and Reaſon
'of Things? And, if ſo, does it not become, as
'ſuch, a *Duty*, and *obligatory*, a Part of the
'*moral Law*, or *Religion of Nature?* and there-
'fore farther, a Part of Conduct which may be
'*inquired* into by the *ſupreme Judge*; to whom
'Man is *accountable*.—But obſerve here, that I
'do not make the *Obligation* to ariſe from his
'being thus *accountable*; but from his being a
'*ſenſible, dependent, rational Agent:* But ſince
'he is *alſo* an accountable Agent, he may be
'called to account for his Conduct in this, as
'well as any other Part of the moral Law.

'Farther ſtill, May not the like be ſaid of an
'*Obligation* of Man, conſider'd as a *ſinful of-*

'*fending*,

'*ſending*, *accountable* Agent, to apply for *Pardon* 'to that ſupreme Judge, on whoſe *Will* and '*Power* alone ſuch *Pardon depends?* Is there 'not, as before, a *Fitneſs of Congruity* in ſuch 'Conduct, ariſing from his *Nature* and *Circum-'ſtances*, and the *Relation* he bears to God? *i. e.* 'would ſuch a Creature act *as ſuch*, if he did 'otherwiſe; and therefore is not a *moral Obli-'gation* thereby induced?

'The Caſe then being thus, is not Man, as 'a *rational Agent*, morally *obliged* to act accord-'ing to theſe *moral Relations* and *Fitneſſes?* 'Would he behave *as* a rational Agent, if he 'did not act according to them? If not, then 'by *being ſuch*, he is *morally obliged* to act *as* 'ſuch, *i. e.* he is *morally obliged* to act *as what* '*he is*; ſince otherwiſe, he could not *be*, what 'by Suppoſition he *is*; for *being* ſuch, is *acting* '*as* ſuch; they are the ſame Thing. This is 'what I mean by *moral Obligation*; which is 'as much *Obligation* as can be induced by any '*Sanctions* whatever: All this I know is ſtrange 'Language to thoſe who cannot ſee that the '*Obligation*, ariſing from the *Nature and Reaſon* '*of Things*, carries its *own Sanction* along with 'it, from the univerſal Confuſion, naturally con-'ſequent upon *counteracting* them; which, to a 'rational Agent, ought to be, (though in fact it 'prove otherwiſe) as ſtrong a *Sanction* as any 'Rewards and Puniſhments ſuperadded; and 'they who deny this to be *Obligation*, ſeem to 'have no Notion of any *Obligation* but *external*, 'and *coercive*, or that a Man cannot be ſaid to be

' *bound* in any other Senſe than that of being tied ' Neck and Heels.

' But it may be ſaid, perhaps, that the ſupreme ' Being, having at once, and eternally, one ' *determin'd* Scheme of Providence, *viz.* of *al-* ' *ways, and invariably doing what is right and* ' *fit to be done in all Caſes*; and *knowing exter-* ' *nally*, and at once, all our *Wants*, and what *is* ' right and fit to be done; and conſequently ' what, in all Caſes, *will* certainly and invaria- ' bly *be* done; the *Act of Prayer* may appear, ' in the Nature and Reaſon of Things, to be ' *improper*, and *unfit*; as it is ſuppoſing, either ' that God may be prevailed upon by it, to do ' what is *not* right and fit to be done; or elſe ' that he would not do what is right and fit to ' be done, *without* it—Alſo to be *uſeleſs* and ' *unneceſſary*; ſince it cannot be ſuppoſed that ' he will (or can, morally ſpeaking) *alter* this ' one eternal Scheme of Providence, *fix'd ac-* ' *cording to the Standard of Rectitude*, on ac- ' count of ſuch *Application* as is ſuppoſed; that ' it may be alſo *unwiſe* (and therefore *unfit*) as ' our Ignorance of the *whole* Scheme of Provi- ' dence may occaſion us to aſk Things *unfit* ' and *improper*, and which, however *partially* ' *good* for us, may *upon the whole* be not ſo— ' and the Act of Prayer be thus, in the Nature ' and Reaſon of Things, *uſeleſs*, *unneceſſary*, *un-* ' *fit*, and *unwiſe*; then, *not obligatory*, or a ' Duty; but the *contrary* of which will be ſo; ' and, *Thy Will be done*, as it is the ſhorteſt, ſo ' it may be thought, perhaps, to be alſo the ' wiſeſt, and moſt religious Addreſs.

' Whether there be, or be not, any Force in ' ſuch Objections, *upon the foot of natural Rea-* ' *ſon*, you will conſider; or whether they may ' be *anſwer'd* by ſaying, that an *Obligation* to ' ſuch Application, does not *exclude* a Defe- ' rence, and Submiſſion at the ſame time to ' God's Will.—That the aſking, thro' Igno- ' rance, Things improper, does not take from ' the Obligation of ſuch Application *in general.* ' —And tho' God be ſuppoſed to have one ' invariable, *determined Scheme* of Providence, ' which is not to be *alter'd* on account of *human* ' *Application*; yet it will not follow that ſuch ' Application is uſeleſs, unneceſſary, or unfit; ' becauſe, *ſuch Application*, appearing *à priori* ' to be *in itſelf* a *fit Action*, from the *natural* ' *Relation* and *Fitneſs of Things*, as before ex- ' plain'd; may it not be ſuppoſed that *ſuch* ' *Action, and Conduct*, on *Man*'s *ſide*, may ' make a *neceſſary Part* of *that Scheme* of Pro- ' vidence; ſo as to be a *Qualification* on the ' *Part of Man, whereby* that Scheme *is to be* ' *perform'd?* i. e. tho' God will always and *in-* ' *variably* do, *what* is *right and fit to be done* in ' all Caſes; and *eternally knew* what always ' *would be ſo*; and conſequently was, in the ' Nature of Things, *certain* and *fixt*, yet that ' *eternal Fitneſs* and *Certainty* in the Scheme of ' Providence, may *depend* on *Man*'s *Performance* ' on *his Part*, in the *Act of Application*, as a ' *fit Action*, ariſing from our *Relation* to him; ' as a *natural Acknowledgment* of our *Depen-* ' *dence*; or as a *neceſſary Qualification*, and

' *Means*

'*Means of Conveyance*; essential to, and so *making a Part* in, the *one invariable Scheme*; being thus *connected with*, and being one *Link* in the great *Chain* of Providence, just as the *eternal Certainty of Events* (which is true of all Events) does not interfere with the *Obligation of Man*, to do *what is right and fit*, to *produce* such Events *as future Contingences*; such Means being, on the contrary, in the Scheme of Providence, *necessarily* or *essentially connected* with that *Certainty* of Events.

'I know not whether I have expressed myself clearly, or whether what I have troubled you with comes up to what you enquire after, either as to the *Question* you intend, or the *Proof* of it.—I pretend only to give a *few Hints*, which, if they meet with your Approbation, you will improve; if otherwise, you will however find at least one *natural Fitness* in them; and whatever *other Obligation* they may fall short of proving, they will not, I hope fail of proving *that* which I think myself under, of always being at your Command, and, dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

Long-Ditton,
Nov. 12. 1748. Jo. CLARKE.

'*P. S.* The Question you propose is attended with Difficulties; and I must confess, that, upon looking this Letter over again, I do not think it comes up to so clear a Proof as I could wish, but believe it may be improved."

Sir,

'IN anſwer to the Favour of your's, concern-
'ing the *natural Fitneſs*, and *moral Obliga-*
'*tion*, of the Duty of *Prayer*, I ſhall join Iſſue
'with you in Opinion that a *moral Obligation*
'may ariſe from the *Fitneſs of Things*, where
'there is no *external* Sanction to enforce it. *Rea-*
'*ſon*, no doubt, is an eternal and immutable
'*Law*, or *Rule* of Action, to all *reaſonable*
'Beings, or, elſe the *Deity* could have no *Law*,
'or *Rule* of Action that is binding upon his *mo-*
'*ral Perfections*, and we could not *reaſon* from
'them in Proof of the Truth of Religion.
'And, if *God* be under a *moral Obligation* to
'make the *Fitneſs* of *Things*, i. e, *Reaſon*, the
'Rule of his Conduct, all *intelligent* Creatures
'muſt be under the ſame *Obligation* to act *rea-*
'*ſonably*, tho' not under the ſame *Neceſſity*, for
'want of his *abſolute Perfection*: But, then, as
'we are not, like the Deity, *ſelf-ſufficient*, and
'yet, as Beings capable of *Happineſs*, or *Miſery*,
'cannot avoid acting with a View to our *own*
'Happineſs, upon the *whole*; if you take away
'the *External Sanctions* of Religion — a *future*
'State of *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* — in many
'Caſes the *natural Fitneſs* or *Reaſon* of Things
'would be *alter'd* with regard to *particular*
'*Perſons*, under *particular Circumſtances*; and,
'conſequently, in all thoſe Caſes all *moral Ob-*
'*ligation* muſt ceaſe, *unleſs* intelligent, conſcious
'Beings could be *morally obliged*, knowingly,
'to make themſelves *Miſerable*, which I ap-
prehend

' prehend to be as contrary to *Reaſon*, and the ' *Fitneſs of Things*, as can poſſibly be conceived. ' I need not give Examples, they being ſo va- ' rious and obvious in common Life: But, let ' us come to the Queſtion, and, in order to it, ' I muſt tranſcribe *my* State of it, as you had it ' in my firſt Letter.

' The Thing to be Proved is this, *viz.* " That " *Prayer* is a Duty, not only as a *natural Means* " of *Religion* and *Virtue*, but in *itſelf*, and for " its *own* ſake; a Duty ariſing from the *Nature* " of *Man*, and the *Nature of God*; from *us*, " as *dependent*, *ſinful* Creatures, to *him*, as our " *Creator*, *Preſerver*, *and Judge*; to which let " me add, farther, by way of Explanation, " without any regard to its Influence upon *our-* " *ſelves*, or *other Men*.

' In your Anſwer to my Letter *you* ſtate my ' Queſtion thus: " The Thing which you want " to ſee prov'd, is contained in the following " Propoſition, *viz.* that the Act of *Prayer*, " from *Man* to the *ſupreme* Being, is a Duty of " *natural Morality*; or a Duty, the Obligation " to which is founded in, and will ariſe, SIM- " PLY, *from* the *natural Relation*, and *Fitneſs* " of *Things*."—In another Part of your Letter ' it is ſtated thus—" The preſent Queſtion is, " Whether the Act of *Prayer*, from *Man* to the " *ſupreme* Being, be an Act to which he is " *ſimply*, as a *rational* Creature, obliged from " the *natural Relation* and *Fitneſs of Things?*"

' Tho' the Obſervation has not an *immediate* ' Connection with our main Queſtion, it may,

‘ however, be of ſome Uſe to obſerve, by the
‘ way, that the Phraſe, *natural Religion*, which
‘ you here uſe, is of an *ambiguous* Signification:
‘ For, when we ſay that any Thing is a Duty
‘ of *natural Religion*, we may mean that the
‘ *natural Underſtanding* of *Man*, *unaſſiſted* by any
‘ *external Revelation*, might have diſcovered our
‘ Obligation to the Performance of it. In this
‘ Senſe of the Words, I muſt be of Opinion
‘ that there is no ſuch Thing as *natural* Religion;
‘ and that if Men had been left, *ſolely*, to the
‘ Guidance of their *unaſſiſted* Reaſon, there never
‘ *would*, or *could*, have been any Religion at all:
‘ —But, if you mean no more by *natural Re-*
‘ *ligion* than this, *viz.* that the *natural Under-*
‘ *ſtanding* of Man, inlightened and ſtrengthen'd
‘ by *external* Communications, and Aſſiſtances
‘ from the Author of it, gradually improv'd this
‘ *natural* Faculty by Exerciſe; by which means
‘ Men, in time, became capable, in great meaſure,
‘ of diſcovering the *natural Fitneſs* of the *moral*
‘ *Duties* of Religion, from the *Relation of*
‘ *Things*; I ſay, if no more than this be meant,
‘ I ſubſcribe to it, and think it as clear as any
‘ one Truth in *Morality*, that *Prayer*, in this
‘ Senſe of *natural Religion*, is one of its prime
‘ Duties, as having, in the Exerciſe of it, a
‘ *natural Fitneſs*, or *Tendency*, to promote *Re-*
‘ *ligion* and *Virtue*, by means of its Influence
‘ upon the Minds and Conduct of Men, which,
‘ I think, muſt be ſufficient to convince you
‘ that you have not *rightly* ſtated *my* Queſtion,
‘ in thoſe Paſſages which I have cited from your
‘ Letter,

‘ Letter; becauſe, it never was a *Queſtion* with
‘ *me*, whether *Prayer* be a Duty of *natural Mo-*
‘ *rality?*—Whether an Obligation to the Per-
‘ formance of it, will not ariſe from the *natural*
‘ *Relation* and *Fitneſs of Things?*—Whether we
‘ be obliged, from ſuch a Relation and Fitneſs,
‘ as *rational* Creatures, to perform it?—If the
‘ Duty be, what I readily *acknowledge* it to be,
‘ in *itſelf*, a *natural Means* of promoting *Reli-*
‘ *gion* and *Virtue*; thence neceſſarily follows its
‘ *natural Morality*, its *natural Fitneſs*, and its
‘ *natural Obligation* upon us, as *rational* Crea-
‘ tures. Thus far, my good Friend, you and
‘ I are at a perfect Agreement;—But, now, we
‘ muſt differ; not a little, but widely;—For,
‘ in a another Part of your Letter, you *wave*
‘ the Conſideration of its *natural Fitneſs*, as a
‘ *Means* of Religion and Virtue, and ſtate the
‘ Queſtion exactly as I have done, but have not,
‘ as I conceive, prov'd the Point *in* Queſtion.
‘ —You there ſay you will not conſider the *na-*
‘ *tural Fitneſs* of Prayer, as a *Means* to an *End*,
‘ but as having in it a *Fitneſs* of CONGRUITY,
‘ ariſing from the *natural Relation* between *God*
‘ and *Man*, or, (as I expreſs'd it) between *us*
‘ *dependent*, and *ſinful Creatures*, and *God* the
‘ *Creator* and *Judge*; affirming, that it is *fit* and
‘ *congruous* that we ſhould *acknowledge* to *Him*,
‘ our *Dependency* and *Sinfulneſs*; and that, with-
‘ out making ſuch an Acknowledgment, we
‘ ſhould not act as it *naturally* becomes Beings
‘ to do, who ſtand in ſuch a Relation. This is
‘ *the* Thing that I wanted, and do ſtill want,

‘ to

'to ſee prov'd.—But, good Sir, I muſt firſt
'take the Liberty (I wiſh you may not think
'that I take *too much* Liberty) to deny your
'*Diſtinction* between a *Fitneſs* of *Means* to an
'*End*, and a *Fitneſs* of *Congruity*, they being,
'according to my Apprehenſion, ſynonymous
'Terms. Whatever has a *Fitneſs* in it as a
'*Means* to an *End*, muſt, likewiſe, have a *Fit-*
'*neſs* of *Congruity*: For, pray Sir, conſider, at-
'tentively, what you mean by *Congruity*: If
'you mean *any* thing, certainly you *muſt* mean
'an *Aptneſs*, or *Suitableneſs*, in ſuch an Action,
'to *anſwer* ſuch a *Purpoſe*, or to *produce* ſuch an
'*Effect*. If there be a *Congruity* (for Inſtance)
'between a State of *Dependence* upon the *ſu-*
'*preme* Being, and an *Acknowledgement*, to *Him*,
'of that Dependence, it muſt be for ſome *Rea-*
'*ſon* that it is *fit* for us ſo to behave. Now,
'what is this *Reaſon*, which conſtitutes the *Fit-*
'*neſs* of *Congruity* in this Caſe? It can be
'nothing different from the *End*, or *Deſign*, in-
'tended to be anſwer'd by ſuch an Action; they
'are the ſame Thing. This *Reaſon*, then, or
'*End*, for which the Action ought to be per-
'form'd, muſt relate to *God*, or to *us*; that is,
'if it be *fit* and *congruous* that *dependent Crea-*
'*tures* ſhould acknowledge ſuch their *Depen-*
'*dency*, to *Him*, on whom they depend, it
'muſt be for one of theſe *Reaſons*, i. e. for one
'of theſe *Ends*, or *Purpoſes*, either, that *we*
'may be benefited, or that *God* may receive
'ſome Advantage, or Pleaſure, from our De-
'votions, *ſimply* conſider'd. Your Argument

'*excludes*

' *excludes* all Regard to the Influence that Prayer
' may have upon *us*, or any Good that it may
' do *us*; and, conſequently, in this way of Rea-
' ſoning, from our *Relation* to *God*, *ſimply* con-
' ſidered, whatever *Fitneſs* there is in it, what-
' ever good *End* can be anſwer'd by this Act,
' it muſt *wholly* reſpect *him* to whom we pray;
' and if it reſpects *God* (which the preſent Ar-
' gument ſuppoſes) he muſt be ſome way, or
' other, *benefited* by it; which, in my Opi-
' nion, is a moſt *blaſphemous* Suppoſition. The
' Thing appears to me in ſo very clear and
' ſtrong a Light, that it requires no Authorities
' to ſupport it; but I ſhall call in three great
' Writers to my Aſſiſtance. The great and
' good *Dr. Scott*, in his *Chriſtian Life*, Vol. I.
' p. 4. Expreſſes himſelf thus, " God's eſſential
" Glory is ſo immenſe and ſecure, that we can
" do nothing to encreaſe, or diminiſh it; and no
" other Glory can redound to him from with-
" out, but what is the Reflection of his own
" natural Rays. He underſtands himſelf too
" well to value himſelf either more, or leſs, for
" the Praiſes, or Diſpraiſes of his Creatures. He
" is enough of Stage and Theatre to himſelf,
" and hath the ſame ſatisfying Proſpect of his
" own Glory in the midſt of all the loud Blaſ-
" phemies of Hell, as among the perpetual Hal-
" lelujahs of Heaven. And, having ſo, it can-
" not be ſuppoſed that he ſhould enjoin us to
" praiſe and glorify him for the ſake of any
" *Good*, or *Advantage*, that may accrue to him-
" ſelf by it, or out of any other Pleaſure that

" he

" he takes in hearing himſelf applauded by us,
" than in any other Act that is reaſonable in
" its own Nature; but it is *therefore* he will
" have us praiſe him becauſe he knows that it
" is for OUR Good, and highly conduces, as it
" is a moſt *reaſonable* Action, to the Perfection
" and Happineſs of our reaſonable Natures; be-
" cauſe our *praiſing* him naturally excites us to
" imitate him, and to tranſcribe into *our own*
" Natures thoſe adorable Perfections which we
" do admire and extol in his.—' Archbiſhop
' *Tillotſon* ſhall be my next Voucher—Speaking
' of the goodneſs of God, p. 681, he ſays, " It
" is great Condeſcenſion and Goodneſs in God to
" *accept* of our Acknowledgements of his Be-
" nefits, of our imperfect Praiſes, and ignorant
" Admiration of him; and were he not as won-
" derfully good, as he is great and glorious, he
" would not ſuffer us to ſully his great and glo-
" rious Name, by taking it into our Mouths.—
' The other is Dr. *Clagget*, on the Lord's Prayer,
' the Introduction to it, where he ſays, " God
" is ſo infinitely above us that it ſeemeth to look
" like Arrogance and Pride for us, ſo much as
" to preſume to ſpeak to him." ' And this ſeems
' to hold ſtill ſtronger, when we conſider our-
' ſelves as *Sinners*. Our *natural Imperfections*,
' when compared with the infinitely glorious
' and perfect God, throw us at ſuch an im-
' menſe Diſtance from him, as cannot avoid
' ſtriking us with ſuch an awful Reverence as
' may make us fearful of approaching him; but,
' when we conſider ourſelves as *Rebels*, as hav-
' ing

‘ing offended againſt ſo much Goodneſs, and
‘ provok'd ſo much Power, inſtead of thinking
‘ it *fit* and *congruous*, from this our *dreadful*
‘ *Relation* to him, to appear before him, it would
‘ more naturally overwhelm our guilty Minds
‘ with Confuſion and Terror, that, like *Adam*
‘ and *Eve* in *Paradiſe*, we ſhould chuſe, rather,
‘ to hide ourſelves from his Preſence. To which
‘ purpoſe I ſhall quote another very pertinent
‘ Paſſage from Dr. *Scot*, p. 204. “ Next to *ba-*
“ *niſhing* us from his Preſence *for ever*, the
“ moſt effectual Courſe that God could take to
“ *abaſe* us, was to exclude us from all *immediate*
“ Intercourſe with him, and not to admit of
“ any Addreſſes, or Supplications from us, but
“ only thro' the Hands of a *Mediator*; which
“ is a plain Demonſtration how infinitely *pure*
“ he is, and how *baſe* and *vile* our Sins have
“ render'd us; inſomuch, that he will not ſuffer
“ a *Sinner* to come near him, but by a *Proxy*;
“ that he will not accept of a *Service* from a
“ guilty Hand, nor liſten to a Prayer from a ſin-
“ ful Mouth, 'till it is firſt *hallowed* and *preſented*
“ to him by a *pure* and *holy* Mediator.” ‘ It is
‘ not only juſtifiable, but commendable, in us,
‘ to enquire into the Reaſonableneſs and great
‘ Uſefulneſs of the Duty of Prayer, in exciting,
‘ and improving, and propagating proper Senti-
‘ ments and Diſpoſitions. This may help to
‘ recommend the Practice of it, and make us
‘ the more conſtant and earneſt in ſuch holy
‘ Exerciſes. But, our principal Care muſt be
‘ to poſſeſs our Minds with the ſtrongeſt Senſe

' of our infinite Obligations to *Revelation*, which,
' alone, can encourage us to draw near to God,
' in full Aſſurance of Faith, that our Addreſſes
' to the Throne of Grace, tho' made by ſuch
' mean, and worthleſs, *leſs* than *worthleſs*, the
' *moſt unworthy* Creatures, to a Being infinite in
' Goodneſs, in Purity, in Wiſdom, in Juſtice,
' and Power, ſhall be graciouſly accepted and
' anſwer'd, if offer'd with a ſincere Heart. We
' are *here* aſſured that *our Demerit*, and the *Im-*
' *perfection* of our *Prayers*, ſhall be amply ſuppli-
' ed by the all-ſufficient Merits of *Chriſt*'s Death;
' who, in virtue of his *meritorious* Paſſion, is
' appointed our *Interceſſor* in Heaven, and con-
' ſtantly reſides there, at his Father's right Hand,
' to recommend our Devotions to his Accept-
' ance. We *Chriſtians*, not only approach
' God as our *Creator*, our *heavenly King*, and
' *Judge*, (Ideas that carry Awfulneſs and Ter-
' ror, that ſerve to intimidate and diſcourage us)
' but, in right of our *Adoption*, we go to God
' with Chearfulneſs and Boldneſs, crying *Abba*,
' *Father*; a Title of *Indearment*, that carries in
' it Tenderneſs and Affection, and an Aſſurance
' that, as an *earthly* Parent pitieth his Children,
' ſo will our *heavenly* Father be compaſſionate,
' indulgent, and condeſcending to *us*, tho' his
' undutiful Children; if we aſk Forgiveneſs
' with Hearts ſincerely penitent. We have,
' moreover, for *our* Encouragement to pray to
' God, a Series of *Examples*, from the Beginning
' of the World, thro' the Hiſtory of the old
' and new Teſtament, of Men of like Paſſions,

' and

‘ and Infirmities with ourſelves, offering up their
‘ Prayers to God, and of the Acceptableneſs and
‘ Efficacy of them.

‘ With my repeated Thanks for your very
‘ ſenſible and ingenious Letter, and Compli-
‘ ments to the Doctor, I am,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

W. WEBSTER.

‘ *P. S.* Upon a Review of my Letter, I find, I
‘ have conceded a thing to you which you
‘ have not proved, and is not true in the Senſe
‘ in which you have aſſerted it, and upon the
‘ Strength of the Argument as you, and I,
‘ both, have ſtated and enforced it.—*Prayer*,
‘ we aſſert to be a *natural Means* of pro-
‘ moting *Religion and Virtue*; and this ap-
‘ pears to be a very clear Truth.—From
‘ hence we deduce its *natural Obligation* upon
‘ us, as *rational Creatures*, nothing being
‘ clearer to our *natural Reaſon* than that it
‘ muſt be the Will of the ſupreme Being,
‘ that *Religion* and *Virtue* ſhould be promoted
‘ among us, his rational Creatures, in the
‘ moſt effectual Manner that may be. But,
‘ 'till we have proved that *Religion* and *Vir-*
‘ *tue* can't be *as* effectually promoted *without*
‘ the Uſe of *Prayer*, as by the Help of it;
‘ we cannot concluſively deduce from the
‘ *natural Effect* of Prayer upon our Minds,
‘ the conſequent *Obligation* to the Practice of
‘ it. Suppoſe, for Inſtance, a *Deiſt* ſhould

‘ aſſert

‘ aſſert that regular, and ſerious, and frequent
‘ *Meditation* upon our *Relation* to *God*, as
‘ *dependent* and *ſinful* Creatures, will be *as*
‘ *effectual* towards exciting and improving
‘ *religious Sentiments* and *Diſpoſitions*, as the
‘ Act of *Prayer*; then, its *Neceſſity*, as a
‘ *Means* towards the *religious and virtuous*
‘ *Ends*, upon which we grounded the *Obli-*
‘ *gation*, ceaſing, does not the *Obligation*, ſo
‘ far as it ariſes from its *natural Tendency*, ceaſe
‘ likewiſe? And if we be not obliged to the
‘ Act of Prayer, on account of its Influence
‘ upon *us*, his Creatures, and for the Sake of
‘ *our own* Good; then we are brought back
‘ to the Neceſſity of proving our Obligation
‘ to the Practice of it, from ſome Conſide-
‘ rations repecting the *Deity*; the Abſurdity
‘ of which I have already prov'd.—We
‘ muſt, therefore, proceed one Step farther,
‘ and ſhew, from the *Nature* and *Circum-*
‘ *ſtances* of *Prayer*, that it is, *in itſelf*, not
‘ only A Means, but a *neceſſary* Means; for-
‘ aſmuch as *Meditation*, or *Contemplation*,
‘ under any poſſible Circumſtances, never *can*
‘ be made *as effectual* a Means towards the
‘ Promotion of Religion and Virtue as Prayer
‘ *may* be. I think, I can prove thus much;
‘ but, I am ſatisfied I ſhall be the better able
‘ to do it by the Aſſiſtance of your farther
‘ Thoughts upon the Subject. Your Letter
‘ has been of ſo much Uſe to me, that, with-
‘ out it I could not have ſtated and proved
‘ my own Notion in the manner that I have

‘ now

'now done. Your Anſwer to an Objection 'is juſt and acute; but, as I am *Opponent*, I 'have nothing to do with it.'

In anſwer to This Letter, I received another from him, conſiſting of nine Pages in *Folio*, full of Ingenuity and ſubtle Diſtinctions, but by no means ſatisfactory; in ſome Places inconſiſtent, and the whole of it too *abſtruſe* to be of *general* Uſe, or Entertainment. At the End of his Letter he deſired that the Diſpute might be concluded by a *perſonal Interview*; but, ſoon after, he was taken ill, and died before I had an Opportunity of ſeeing him; and by his Death the World loſt the Example of a pious *Chriſtian*, and the Advantages of a very able Writer, while his Friends were deprived of an uſeful, entertaining, and agreeable Companion. I am glad of This decent Opportunity of paying my publick Reſpects to his Memory; and, though, for the Reaſon above-mentioned, I do not think fit to *publiſh* his ſecond Letter, I ſhall preſerve it for the Satisfaction of any of his Friends who may have the Curioſity to peruſe it.

About five and twenty Years ago (for ſo long have I given a particular Attention to This Subject) I took the Liberty of writing to another Gentleman, of the ſame Name, and of equal Eminence for his *metaphyſical* Capacity; I mean the late celebrated Mr. *Clarke*, of *Hull*. Tho' I was a mere Stranger to him, he very readily complied with my Requeſt, and ſent me what he apprehended to be a concluſive Argument in

proof of the Duty of *Prayer* from *natural Principles*. This Letter, with my Reply, I have loſt, together with many other Papers, in the conſtant Hurry of a fatiguing, diſagreeable Life; but I have not loſt the Subſtance of them, becauſe I ſoon took Occaſion to work them up into a *Sermon* upon the Subject, and preached it with Approbation at the *Univerſity*-Church at *Cambridge*. His Argument was ſhort, and, like his *Nameſake's*, drawn from the *Fitneſs* of *Things*; not My Friend's *Fitneſs* of *Congruity*, as he ſtiles it, but the *Fitneſs* of a *Means* to an *End*. He obſerved, very juſtly, that every *ſober Deiſt* muſt own a *moral Obligation* to uſe the *moſt likely Means* to promote *Virtue*; and then proceeded to ſhew, that *Prayer* was a *Means* of promoting it, by the Influence which it muſt have upon our Minds when the Duty is properly diſcharged; and, conſequently, that it muſt be every Man's *Duty* to *pray*. In my Reply, I agreed with him as to the *good Influences* of Prayer, that it was a *natural Means* of promoting Virtue; but denied that, *therefore*, it muſt be a *natural Duty*, becauſe it might not be a Means *neceſſary* to the Support of Virtue. If Virtue may be as effectually ſupported and promoted by any *other* Means, then the *Neceſſity* of it ceaſes, and the Force of his Argument is deſtroyed, as I obſerved in my *Poſtſcript* to my Letter to my other Friend. As I there ſaid, if a *Deiſt* ſhould pretend that *regular Meditation* may be *as* effectual a *Means* to promote Virtue, as *Prayer* can be, it is incumbent upon us, if we will argue with him upon *natural Principles*,

Principles, to disprove that Assertion, and shew that *Meditation*, under any possible Circumstances, cannot be so *effectual* a Means as *Prayer* may be made. In my Reply I attempted to prove This, and had the good Luck to do it to his Satisfaction; and I make no doubt of doing it here to the Satisfaction of every impartial Reader. But, before I enter upon the Argument, I must observe, that the *Deists*, when they would *seem* to substitute *regular Contemplation* in the room of *Prayer*, are not sincere, neither would it answer their Purpose, because such frequent Returns of serious Contemplation would keep their Consciences too often awake, and be too great a Check to the Indulgence of their Vices; which, I dare say, is their *real* Objection against Prayer. This Observation I thought proper, by way of Caution to unwary *Christians*, against the deceitful Artifices of the *Deists*.

All *Deists*, who profess to believe the Principles of *natural* Religion, must allow, that all Men are obliged to use the most effectual Means that our *Reason* is capable of shewing us, for the promoting of *Religion* and *Virtue*. The Passions of *Fear* and *Love* are the great Springs of human Actions: All *Religion* and *Virtue* consist in our *Obedience* to the *Will* of God, and in the *Imitation* of his *imitable* Perfections: Our *Fear* and *Love* of him are the strongest Incitements to such an Obedience and Imitation. The Question, then, between *us* and the *Deists* is, *what* appears to our *Reason*, from the *Nature* of

Things, the moſt effectual Means of cultivating and improving thoſe two ruling Paſſions. *We* ſay, that a conſtant and regular Intercourſe between our *Maker* and *us*, by *Prayer*, is the moſt effectual Means; and that it appears *from hence* to be the *Will* of God that we *ſhould* pray to him. *They* ſay, that it will be ſufficient for the Purpoſes of *Religion* and *Virtue*, becauſe ſufficent towards the Cultivation and Improvement of the *Fear* and the *Love* of God, if we accuſtom ourſelves conſtantly and regularly to *think* upon *God* and *ourſelves*, and the *Relation* that we ſtand in towards him; and, conſequently, that we cannot prove *Prayer* to be a *reaſonable* Act, much leſs to be a *Duty*, or that the Honour of *ſpeaking* to the ſupreme Being is ſo much as *permitted* us. This, I think, is a fair State of the Queſtion between us; and without the leaſt Diſtruſt of the Iſſue, I ſhall attempt as fairly to determine it; which I ſhall do by conſidering the *natural Conſequences* of each Scheme. But, before I come to the *main* Argument,—a Compariſon of the *natural* Effects of *Meditation*, and That Act of the Mind which we call *Prayer*, I ſhall make a ſhort Obſervation, not impertinent to the Point in Diſpute.—If This Buſineſs were left to be done by *Meditation*, very few, even of thoſe who are capable of it, would ever give themſelves the Trouble of meditating ſo ſeriouſly. It requires a *Habit* of thinking regularly, to be able to range their Thoughts in ſuch an orderly Manner, as may imprint them ſo ſtrongly upon their Minds, as may give them

a proper Influence upon their Conduct. If it be ſaid that This Inſufficiency may be ſupplied by a written Abſtract, upon thoſe Subjects for their conſtant Uſe; I anſwer, that This would not *fix* the *Attention* ſo much as *directing* our Thoughts to ſome *Object* is able to do; which naturally leads me to ſhew that *Praying*, that is, *ſpeaking*, to God, is a *ſtronger*, and more *influencial* Act of the Mind, than barely *thinking* of him; and, conſequently, better fitted to promote *Religion* and *Virtue* than *Contemplation*, conſidered under all poſſible Circumſtances of Advantage.—*Speaking*, or *addreſſing* ourſelves to one another, is an *habitual* and *familiar* Act of the Mind, the Method of preſerving an Intercourſe between one another; the uſual and moſt effectual Means of exciting the ſeveral Paſſions of Anger and Love, Deſire and Hatred; by the Means of which *habitual* Practice, the Fear and the Love of God, a lively Senſe of his Preſence and Attributes, will be more ſtrongly preſerved by *ſpeaking*, or *addreſſing* our Minds to him after the uſual manner, in which we have been accuſtomed to ſpeak to each other, than by bare *Contemplation*, the former Action of the Mind receiving a particular Force from *Habit* and *Familiarity*. Neither *can* Contemplation be made ſo *habitual*, and *familiar*, and *eaſy* to the Generality of Mankind, as the Action of *ſpeaking* to another Being; becauſe the Occaſions of *ſpeaking* to one another are *frequent* and *unavoidable*, which makes That Action of the Mind *habitual* and *familiar*; whereas we are

ſo far from being under the Neceſſity of acquiring a *Habit* of ſerious and cloſe *Meditation*, that moſt People find it a very difficult Thing, becauſe the Attention is diverted by external Objects, or by Ideas before received into the Mind from ſuch Objects. But *Prayer*, that is, *ſpeaking*, or *directing*, our Minds to God, does, as it were, make the Divine Being *preſent* to our very *Senſes*; foraſmuch as the ſame Action of the Mind, has been uſually accompanied with ſome *external* Object viſible to the Senſes: Beſides, the Actions of the *Body* concurring with that of the *Mind*, muſt alſo, by the Force of *Habit*, help to fix the Attention, and make the Effects the ſtronger. I verily think This Argument can never be anſwered without denying *human Nature*, and the Power of *Habit*, to be what we daily *ſee* and *feel* them to be; inſomuch, that if the Duty of *Prayer* were to be wholly omitted, the very Notion of a *God* and his *Providence* would be quite loſt among the Generality of Mankind, as to any religious Effects upon their Minds. This is not an *abſtracted metaphyſical* Argument, calculated only for the *learned Philoſopher* who has been accuſtom'd to *nice Speculation*, but it is an Argument drawn from *known Facts* and *Experience*, and ſuch a one as any Perſon who will be at the Trouble of attending to it may underſtand. By the way of Illuſtration, let us ſuppoſe that we had offended one of our Fellow-creatures, no doubt can be made but that if we were ſeriouſly to reflect upon it, it would affect every honeſt and generous Mind;

but

but if, inſtead of *barely thinking* upon it, we were to come into his Preſence, fall upon our Knees before him, and in a moſt ſubmiſſive Manner aſk his Pardon; This would have a much greater Effect, help more to increaſe the Senſe of our Guilt, and to form a Reſolution to behave better for the future. Thus it is with regard to our Addreſſes to *God*. By uſing the ſame Actions, both of Body and Mind, by which we conſtantly converſe with one another, we ſhall make him more immediately preſent to our Thoughts, which will have a much greater Influence upon us than *barely thinking* of him could have.

If This Argument be concluſive with regard to *private* Prayer, (and I may ſafely defy the whole Body of the *Deiſts* to diſprove it) it will hold *much ſtronger*, and *more apparently*, for *publick* and *joint* Prayer, tho' the latter has generally been thought leſs capable of being proved from *natural Principles*. In the Performance of *publick* and *joint* Prayer, the *Looks* and *Geſtures* and *Voices* of the Congregation will help to kindle and inflame in each other religious Affections and Diſpoſitions. For inſtance, the united Voice of a Number of People confeſſing their Sins, with a proper Tone of Voice, accompanied with ſuitable Looks and Geſtures, expreſſive of Sorrow, and Shame, and Fear; I ſay, their *united* Voices, and Looks, and Behaviour, muſt in the *very nature of Things*, be more effectual towards promoting the proper ends of Confeſſion, than any *private* Acknowledgement of our Sins can

poſſibly be, becauſe the Condition of the Mind, during its Union with the *Body*, is ſuch, that it neceſſarily receives ſtrong Impreſſions from *external* Objects. To deny This, is to deny that we have any *Senſes* at all, or that we have ever had any *Experience* of their *Effects* upon the *Mind*. And if This be, (what every one of us daily *experiences* it to be) the preſent State of *human Nature*, the conſequent Expediency of *publick* and *joint* Prayer, conſidered as the *moſt* effectual Means of promoting *Virtue*, and our Obligations from the Principles of *natural* Religion, to perform thoſe Duties, are *demonſtratively* True: And, therefore, let theſe proud Boaſters of their *Reaſon*, and *pretended Friends* to *Virtue*, diſprove This Account of the preſent State of human Nature, and the Influence of our *Senſes* upon our *Minds*, or let them throw off the Maſk, and openly acknowledge that, in their Opinion, there is no ſuch thing as *Virtue*, or any *moral Obligation* really ſubſiſting. But, I muſt repeat what I have already obſerved, that tho' theſe Arguments are quite Satisfactory to *us*, whoſe Minds have been ſtrengthened and illuminated by *frequent Revelations*, I am far from thinking that *unaſſiſted Reaſon* could have diſcovered them ſo clearly and ſtrongly to Mankind, as they *now* appear to us. This, however, only ſhews us our own Happineſs, in having the great Advantages of *Revelation*, but does not, in the leaſt, weaken the Force of the Argument in reſpect to the *Deiſts*. Before I take leave of theſe violent *Patrons* of *natural Religion*,

Religion, I muſt ſuggeſt another Obſervation to them, which deſerves their Conſideration; I mean, the *general Agreement* of Mankind in the *publick Worſhip* of their *Deity*, or *Deities*. There never was a People, even in the darkeſt Corner of the *Heathen World*, who did not acknowledge their Belief of a God and this Providence, by *publickly worſhipping* him. Now, This *univerſal Practice*, while it teſtifies the concurrent *Sentiments* of Mankind, is as good a Proof of the *Reaſonableneſs* of the *Duty* of Prayer, and of their Obligations, conſidered as *Men*, to perform it, as the general Belief of a *God* has always been allowed to be a Proof of the *Reality* of his Exiſtence. For, into what can we reſolve ſuch an *univerſal* Concurrence of *Opinion* and *Practice* but into the Voice of *God*, or the Voice of *Nature*, to both which all *reaſonable* Creatures muſt acknowledge themſelves obliged to hearken. We muſt either ſuppoſe that the *Duty* of *Prayer* was originally made known to Mankind by an *immediate external Revelation*, and propagated to ſucceeding Times by *Tradition*; or, that it appears ſo plain from the *very Frame* and *Conſtitution* of our Beings, as *dependent* Creatures, that *Reaſon* has always aſſented to our Obligations to the Practice of it; or, that Mankind have been led to the Practice of it by a kind of *Inſtinct* implanted in us by the Author of our Nature, in order to preſerve in our Minds a conſtant and lively Senſe of our *Dependence* upon him: This Argument deſerves to be conſidered, and will not eaſily be anſwered, by thoſe who would be

thought to believe the Truths of *natural Religion*, tho' we CHRISTIANS are leſs concerned to maintain the Force of it. The *Deiſts* (as *Infidels* are pleaſed to ſtyle themſelves) are apt to extol the *moral Philoſophy* of the *Heathens*, and the great Abilities of the *Authors*. The late Lord *Bolinbrooke* has exceeded any of his Predeceſſors in his Encomiums upon them, and has made a moſt pompous Parade, with Extracts of their Maxims. But, what was the Deſign of all this Laviſhneſs? Not to give a Sanction to *Virtue*, by *their* Authorities; but to diſcredit *Revelation:* If the Intention had been to recommend and promote the Intereſt of *Virtue*, they would pay the ſame Regard to the Sentiments of thoſe great Men in reſpect to *Religion* and *Piety*; whereas they pay none at all, but are quite ſilent upon That Head. All the antient *Heathens* had the higheſt Eſteem and Zeal for the *religious Worſhip* of their *Gods*. The *Romans*, in particular, laid ſo great a Streſs upon it, that they aſcrib'd the Succeſs of their Arms to their *Piety*, which, in their Opinion, procured them the Aſſiſtance of the *divine Providence*. Not ſo, the preſent *Deiſts*; who have improved ſo much upon their *Predeceſſors* that they ſeem to exclude a *Providence* out of the World; and, in conſequence of their *Infidelity*, never pay their Devotions to *God*, while they deny his *Exiſtence*, or his *Interpoſal* in the Government of the World. I have lately heard a very remarkable Thing, from very good Hands, of the *Right Honourable* Writer, above-men-

tion'd. The late Dr. *Conyers Middleton* left a *MS.* upon *Prayer*; not in *Favour* of it, the Reader may be morally aſſured. Whether the *Dr.* left it with an Intention of having it publiſh'd after his Death my Informer did not ſay; but the Widow, it ſeems, was prevailed upon to ſuppreſs it. His Lordſhip, by ſome Means, or another, contriv'd to get a Sight of it, and found it ſo agreeable to his Opinions and Schemes, that he has taken proper Meaſures for its Publication. I hope I am miſinform'd; but the Gentleman who gave me this Account is a Perſon of ſuch good Intelligence, and ſo much Credit, that I believe it to be true; and I am the more inclin'd to believe it, becauſe ſuch a Deſign ſeems quite agreeable to the Writings of his *Lordſhip*, and the *Dr.* How it can be conſiſtent with their large Pretenſions of *Zeal* for *Virtue*, and the Good of Mankind, muſt be a *Secret* till ſome of theſe *inlighten'd Philoſophers* ſhall think fit to ſhew us. At preſent, I am willing to think, I *have* proved, and *ſhall* ſtill more fully prove, that by diſcrediting *Prayer* they are doing irreparable Injury to *Virtue*, and the *Publick*. Be that as it will, their *Inconſiſtency* and *Partiality* are undeniable, while they ſo highly extol the *moral* Sentiments of the antient Heathens, but diſdainfully reject their *religious* Opinions. Whatever Weight thoſe celebrated Names carry with them, *Piety* and *Prayer* claim it all. As to thoſe who believe the Truth of *Revelation*, they have a continued *Series* of Examples; not of *Philoſophers*, not of *mere Men*, but of *Prophets*,

phets, and *Apoſtles*, who lived and acted, continually, under the immediate *Inſpiration* and *Direction* of *God*; whoſe *deliberate* and *habitual* Conduct, therefore, is not only an infallible Rule of what is *lawful*, but of what is binding upon us, as a *neceſſary Duty* in Matters of This Nature. We have, moreover, the Practice of *Chriſt* himſelf, who has expreſſly told us, that it is our Duty to follow his Steps; that he took upon him our Nature, and dwelt among us, in order to inſtruct us by his *Example*, as well as by *poſitive Precepts*. I need not produce Inſtances to prove a Fact that muſt be ſufficiently obvious to every one who has looked into the *Bible*, or heard it read. But, beſides all theſe *Examples*, we have *expreſs* Precepts for the Duty of *Prayer*, both in the *old* and *new Teſtament*. I know, it is a current Opinion among many learned Men, that there is no *expreſs Precept* for Prayer under the *old* Teſtament: Of this Opinion was that excellent Man, Biſhop *Blackhall*: At the 86th Page of the *Octavo* Edition of his Sermons, upon theſe Words, *when thou prayeſt*, &c. he obſerves, that "It is not "here *directed*, or *commanded*, that we ſhould "ever put up any Prayers to God; but 'tis *ſup-* "*poſed* by our Saviour that This is a *Duty*, and "that Men are generally ſo perſuaded of the "Neceſſity of it, that they cannot be ſatisfied "in their own Minds, while they live in the "Neglect thereof; and 'tis indeed a Duty taught "ſo clearly by the Light of *Nature*, that there "was no Need that it ſhould be enjoin'd by

"any

" any *positive Precept*; and therefore we do not " find that in the Law of *Moses*, there is any " *Precept* commanding This Duty." I have several Remarks to make upon This Passage, which is by no means accurate, or just. In the *first* Place, if he means, by *in* the Law of *Moses*, the *Ten Commandments*, it is true, but nothing to the Purpose because, if it be any where commanded *under the Jewish* Dispensation, it is the same Thing. *Secondly*, a Thing may carry the *Force*, or *Obligation*, of a *Precept*, tho' it be not express'd *directly* in the *preceptive* Stile. If it any way appears that it is the *Will* of *God* that we should do a thing, his *Will* is a *Law*, or *Command*, for the doing of it, let the *Manner* of *Expression* be what it will; and answers all the Purposes of an *express Precept*. This I apprehend to be the Case with regard to the Passage in our *Saviour*'s Sermon, which the Bishop quotes; but it is not to my present Purpose to consider it. *Thirdly*, he says, that *Prayer* is a *Duty so clearly taught by the Light of Nature, that there was no Need of a* POSITIVE PRECEPT to *enjoin* it. The *Light* of *Nature* is an *ambiguous* Expression, as I have before observ'd. If he meant that *mere Reason, unassisted* by *Revelation*, could *clearly* discover Prayer to be a Duty, I have already shewn the contrary to be true. Nay, farther, that without *Revelation* we could not prove that we are so much as *permitted* to pray to God, consequently, that the *Practice* took its *Rise* from a *positive Precept*. But, now let us enquire whether God has not *declar'd*

it,

it, in the *old* Teſtament, to be his *Will* that we ſhould *pray* to him; if he *has*, then *Prayer* is *enjoined* by a *poſitive Command* under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation. Before the building of the *Temple*, there had been Places, particularly, the *Tabernacle*, conſecrated by the Appointment of *God*, for his Worſhip, where he gave *viſible* Tokens of his more *immediate Preſence*: It is abſolutely certain, from plain Paſſages of Scripture, that *Prayer* was practiſed in thoſe Days; from whence it muſt be concluded, that *Prayer* was Part of the Worſhip which God *required* them to offer up in thoſe Places, which he had *appointed*, and *ſanctified*. But, the *Temple*, which was built by *God*'s *immediate Direction*, is ſtiled, by himſelf, the *Houſe* of *Prayer*. In This Houſe he promiſed to meet his People, to hear, and accept their Addreſſes. Is not This a *divine Appointment* to *pray* to God in this *conſecrated* Place? To This Houſe they were to *look* whenever they *prayed*, in *any other* Place, in full Aſſurance that *God* would hear and accept ſuch Prayers. Was not This a *divine Appointment*, *commanding* all People to *pray*? But, there are in the Old Teſtament many *expreſs Directions* to This Purpoſe, ſuch as theſe. *O thou that heareſt Prayer, unto thee ſhall all Fleſh come.—Prayer ſhall be made ever unto him, and daily ſhall he be praiſed.—Sing forth the Honour of his Name, make his Praiſe to be glorious.*—Say unto God, *How terrible art thou in thy Works?—O bleſs our God, ye People.—Offer to God Thankſgiving.—Then they ſhall confeſs their Sins that they have done.*—Are not

theſe

theſe *poſitive Directions* for every Part of Prayer? Were not theſe Directions given by *divine Inſpiration?* Is not, then, the Duty of Prayer a *divine Appointment?* Was not all This done during the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, while the Law of *Moſes* was in Force? And if all This be true, as it moſt certainly is, how can any learned Man ſay, that when our Saviour gave his Diſciples Directions concerning Prayer, Men were *ſuppoſed* to have practiſed this Duty, not by any *divine Appointment*, but upon the Principles of *natural* Religion only?—If we proceed to the *New Teſtament*, we meet with Variety of the plaineſt Precepts; ſome of which I ſhall tranſcribe.—*Men ought always to pray.—I will that Men pray every where.—Pray without ceaſing.—Watch and pray.—Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication; with Thankſgiving, let your Requeſts be made known unto God.* I avoid troubling the Reader with any Quotations, where the *particular Parts* of Prayer are *diſtinctly* mentioned, becauſe *That* has been done under the firſt Head; where I ſhewed the different Acceptations of the Word in different Places, and that it ſometimes comprehends *every Part* of Prayer, as in the following Words, *pray with all Prayer*. But This Point is ſo very obvious, that no Man can deny that *every* Part of Prayer is commanded in the *New Teſtament*. The only Difficulty is, to account for the Neglect of This important Duty in thoſe who profeſs their Belief of the *Bible*, and eſpecially in thoſe who profeſs themſelves the Diſciples of *Chriſt*,

Christ, while they refuse to follow the *Example*, or *Precepts* of their *Master*. He prayed, himself, both in *publick*, and in *private*; in the *Temple*, and on *Mountains*, and in *Desarts*; in the most *frequented*, and in the most *retir'd* Places; he hath *taught*, and *commanded*, all his Followers to pray; and, yet, we have too much Reason to fear that Numbers, who *dishonour* his Name by calling themselves *Christians*, never offer up any Prayers to God in their Closets, or with their Families; and some there are who scarce ever appear in any Place of *publick Worship*; very few that attend *publick* Prayers so often as they *might*, and *would* do if they had a right Notion of their Obligation to the Performance of a Duty so positively enjoined, so advantageous and comfortable to those who perform it properly. The *first* of these, the determined *Infidel*, and notoriously *irreligious* Professor of *Christianity*, I can only *pray* for, not having much Hope of *converting*, and *reclaiming* them; but I shall endeavour to enforce a more frequent Practice of This Duty upon all those who retain any serious Sense of Religion.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the Effects *of Prayer.*

IN the last Chapter I shew'd, from the *Nature* of Prayer, that it must be a more influencial Means of *Religion* and *Virtue* than *Meditation*, or *Contemplation*, under any possible Circumstances;

cumſtances; but I ſhall now enlarge upon the advantageous Effects of it upon our Minds. Upon this Occaſion I ſhall cite a Paſſage from that truly pious *Chriſtian*, Archbiſhop *Sharp*, in one of his moſt admirable Sermons, p. 30, Vol. 4. " Prayer is to our *Souls* what Meat and " Drink are to our Bodies; their Repaſt, their " Nouriſhment, and Support: Prayer is the " great univerſal Inſtrument by which we fetch " down Bleſſings from above, and obtain what- " ever we want: Prayer is our Defence againſt " Sin, and Temptation; the Security of our Vir- " tue, and the eſpecial Means to advance it.

" Prayer is the Wing of our Souls, whereby " we raiſe up ourſelves, above this lower World " to the God above, and with whom while we " therein converſe, we become more and more " transform'd into his Nature.

" Whatever Anticipations of Heaven there " are here upon Earth; whatever Foretaſtes we " *Chriſtians* have, in theſe Bodies, of the Hap- " pineſs of Eternity, they are all effected by the " Means of *Prayer*."

This *general* Account of the Matter is certainly juſt, and ſtrong, and tender; what That *Saint* on Earth experienced in himſelf; what every other *Chriſtian* may feel, in Proportion as he approaches towards *his* angelic Diſpoſition, and habitual Exerciſe of the Duty. But, if we conſider attentively the Nature of the Thing, we may eaſily perceive *how* the proper Performance of every Part of Prayer produces pious and virtuous Diſpoſitions. When we praiſe and magnify

God's glorious Name, and wonderful Works, we are employed like the *Angels* in *Heaven*, and, by these heavenly Exercises, are qualifying ourselves to join with those blessed Spirits in their eternal *Hallelujahs*; and at the same Time fitting ourselves for the several Duties of *this* Life. When we address ourselves to God as the Possessor of all Perfections, the Fountain of all Good, the Author of all that Happiness that we have, or expect; as a Being in whom are all the Excellencies that we admire in this World, and from whom every thing that is amiable and attracting flow as so many Rivulets from his inexhaustible Fountain of Beauty and Goodness, as so many Emanations from his infinite Fulness; I say, a Habit of addressing ourselves to him under this pleasing and engaging, but awful, Character, cannot fail of working in us a settled *Fear*, and *Love*, and *Gratitude*. We shall *fear* him, because he is dreadful, even in his most amiable Perfections, because they are *infinite*; we must *love* him, not only because he is the most amiable Being, but because he exercises all his Perfections for the Good of his Creatures; and our Hearts must be tenderly affected with the Sense of his communicating to us all the Good and Happiness that we enjoy. This triple Cord of *Fear*, *Love*, and *Gratitude*, will bind us to an Imitation of his Nature, and Obedience to his Commands. This constant Intercourse with God in *Prayer* will imprint upon our Minds an habitual Sense of his *Presence*, which must needs have an Influence upon every Part of our Behaviour;

viour; be a perpetual Check upon us; keep the Conſcience always awake, and tender; it will fix in us ſuch a thorough Belief of God's *governing Providence*, as will greatly help to preſerve an *Evenneſs* and *Compoſure* of Temper; it will correct any unbecoming *Levity* of Mind, and all *intemperate Mirth*; it will *ſpiritualize* the Thoughts and Inclinations of the *Carnal* and *Senſual*; cure the *Worldly-minded* of their Ambition and Avarice; it will humble the Proud, and make the Vain more Modeſt: For, can a Man be *proud*, and *vain*, who daily appears before his *Judge* in the Capacity of a Sinner that has forfeited his Life! Before his *Creator*, as a *Beggar* that conſtantly ſubſiſts upon his *univerſal Bounty!* Can a Man be elated on account of any *perſonal Excellencies*, who daily acknowledges his own many *Imperfections*, and the *infinite Perfections* of *That God* to whom we owe every thing that is *excellent* in us! By *daily Prayer* a Man daily acknowledges that we are all, in the main, as *Men*, and as *Chriſtians*, upon a *Level*; and can he overvalue himſelf, and diſdainfully treat others, on account of ſome *little, external* Advantages that diſtinguiſh us as Members of *civil Society!* But, I ſhall *inlarge* upon ſome Particulars which will fully ſhew, not only the great Advantage, but even the *Neceſſity*, of Prayer, in order to make us good Chriſtians.

1*ſt*, It is plain from the Holy Scriptures, and confeſs'd on all hands, that we ought to be *heavenly-minded*; to ſet *our Affections on Things above*, and not *on Things on the Earth*. Now,

this is utterly impoſſible for us to do, unleſs we practiſe the Duty of *Prayer*: For, we find, by daily Experience, that, by reaſon of the great Corruption of our Nature, the great Variety of ſenſual Objects, and the ſtrong Impreſſions which ſuch Objects make upon us, our Souls are groveling in the Duſt; we are, in our Affections, as it were, *chained* to the *Earth*; we ſeem to regard little elſe but *temporal* Things; accumulating *Wealth*, either upon the impertinent Scheme of hoarding it up, and making no Uſe of it, or upon a worſe Motive, That of conſuming it upon our Luſts; at beſt, providing a reputable Subſiſtence for our Families, Relations, or Friends, without a due Attention to our *own*, or *others* eternal Welfare in the *next* Life. It is with the utmoſt Difficulty that ever we *raiſe* our Minds to *Heaven*, and *force* them to contemplate upon *God*, and the ſpiritual Comforts of dwelling with him in Glory. No ſooner do we lift up our Hearts, but the dead Weight of Infirmities, and Sins, and earthly Concerns, preſſes us down again, ſo that we are quite averſe to the ſublime Joys of meditating upon the beſt Objects. Now, this Unwillingneſs to think upon God, to ſeparate ourſelves from this preſent World, that we may with the greater Freedom taſte of the more refined Pleaſures of *Religion*, cannot be cured but by the Exerciſe of *Prayer*; which, the more it is uſed, does the more powerfully, and with the greater Eaſe, raiſe our Thoughts aloft, and carry them up beyond the Rubbiſh and Droſs of ſenſual Concerns. Our *Converſe*

with

with God by *Prayer* does by inſenſible Degrees, firſt, *create*, and then *quicken* in us an Appetite after immaterial, and immortal Pleaſures; it kindles within us warm Deſires after what is really noble, and good; and fills us with ſuch an ardent Zeal for Objects of this kind, as will cauſe us heartily to love them, and eagerly to purſue them. *Prayer* is the very *Food* of our Souls, and ſupports them in their *ſpiritual* Life; it gives them Heat and Vigour in their *Chriſtian* Courſe, and without it they are ſluggiſh and inactive. This is evident to the moſt careleſs Obſerver of Mankind; they who *neglect* Prayer are negligent about every thing relating to *another* Life. Tell them how they may acquire *worldly Advantages*; open to them a Proſpect of getting *Preferment*; propoſe to them a Scheme of *Amuſement*, and they will ſoon hear you; they are all Attention; their Deſires are immediately upon the Wing; their Imaginations upon the Stretch, the whole Man all alive; but tell them of *dying*, and going into the *other* World, and you ſtrike them to the *Heart*, they are in the utmoſt Confuſion, their Spirits ſink, their Countenance changes, they are in a manner dead: Their Souls are wholly poſſeſſed and actuated, by the good Things of this Life; *They* are their only Felicity, their only Principle of Life, and Action. But, ſuch as converſe with *God* by *Prayer* do thereby *ſpiritualize* their Souls; they *refine* their Appetites; they grow in Love with the Life to come; they truly reliſh every Thing that is ſubſervient to that grand View; they

prepare themſelves, by *Devotion*, for the Imployment of *Angels* in Heaven; and begin, or, at leaſt, have a Foretaſte of, their future Joys, in the bleſſed Intercourſe between God, and their own Souls. This is the Difference between a *natural* Man, and a *ſpiritual* Man; the *natural* Man delights in *temporal* Things, and his Love towards them increaſes perpetually, by his perpetual Acquaintance with them. But, the principal Delight of the *ſpiritual* Man conſiſts chiefly in ſpiritual Things. He hath quite different *Principles* and *Appetites*, and in the Exerciſe of his *ſpiritual Faculties*, his *ſpiritual Life* conſiſts. Now, as the *bodily* Appetites muſt ceaſe unleſs ſupported with daily Food, ſo will the Appetites of the *Soul* be deſtroyed, and the Soul loſe all Senſe of *ſpiritual* Pleaſure, unleſs, by the Exerciſe of *Prayer*, they be fed, and nouriſh'd, and thereby preſerved, in Vigour, and Activity: As an Intimacy with *worldly* and *ſenſual* Enjoyments inflames our Love for them, and our Eſtrangement from them cools our Affections for them, ſo a frequent Converſation with *God* by *Prayer* makes us take the more Delight in him; and our Abſence from him, by omitting our Prayers, our leaving off, or diſcontinuing, this friendly Intercourſe with him, gradually creates a *Strangeneſs*, and *cools* our Affections; and we loſe that *Heavenly-mindedneſs*, which is our abſolute Duty, and a neceſſary Qualification for our Employment and Happineſs among the bleſſed Inhabitants above.

2*dly*,

2*dly*, The Exercise of *Prayer* is of infinite Service towards our living comfortably in all Circumstances of Life. That we ought to be satisfied and easy under the different Dispensations of Providence, is so plain a Truth, that I think no body can be ignorant of it. Our blessed *Lord* teaches us to pray that God's Will *may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*; and, consequently, we are indispensably bound to submit to all the Disposals of our heavenly Father; not only to be *contented*, but *chearful* under them. Now, in order to this State of Mind, two Things are necessary.—*First*, That we be not over anxious about the Success of our Affairs.—*Secondly*, That we be not displeas'd with such Evils as are actually come upon us; and in both these Cases the constant Exercise of *Prayer*, when rightly performed, will be very helpful.

First, I say, it makes Men perfectly easy with respect to *future Contingencies*; with respect to what *may* happen in the *Changes* of this uncertain Life. It is evident that an *over*-careful Temper is a great Misfortune, it robs a Man of all present Satisfaction, and makes his Life a Burden to him; but PRAYER *removes* this great Evil: He that is accustom'd to converse with his *Creator*, the *wise* and *good* Governour of the World, by so doing practises *Resignation*, gives himself *up wholly* into God's Hands, and thereby acquires the Habit of being *without Carefulness*; because, having trusted all Things in the Hands of a *good* and *gracious Master*, of a *kind* and *tender Father*; he cannot but be assured that all

his Affairs ſhall be ſo order'd as, in the final Iſſue of things, ſhall be beſt for him; and *Anxiety* is ſo utterly inconſiſtent with this abſolute Reſignation, that the Practice of the one muſt neceſſarily deſtroy the other. Beſides, he that does rightly perform the Duty of Prayer, does always pray for a Bleſſing upon all his Endeavours; and whenever he ſets about any *particular* Buſineſs, he begs God's peculiar Providence over him in it; when he has done this he cannot doubt of as much Succeſs as is conſiſtent with his own *real* Good, tho', perhaps, not always what is moſt *agreeable* to him: And, therefore, every good Man, thus imploring the Bleſſing of God upon his Endeavours, may depend upon Succeſs whenever it is not better for him to be without it. For which Reaſon, he that thus practiſes *Prayer*, can never be ſolicitous about *Futurity*; he is abſolutely certain that, upon the whole, every thing ſhall turn out to his Advantage: This gives him a Tranquillity of Mind to which others muſt be Strangers. *They* are divided and torn to Pieces by perplexing Thoughts; their Minds, like the troubled Sea that caſteth up Mire and Dirt, is frequently foreboding Diſaſters; and, having placed no Confidence in *God*, the great Diſpoſer of all Things, they have no Security that any real Calamity which they dread ſhall not happen, thwart their Deſigns, and bring them into Diſtreſs. But,

Secondly, the Exerciſe of *Prayer* can make Men eaſy under all thoſe Calamities, *which* are

actually

actually fallen upon them. The beſt Man upon Earth cannot promiſe himſelf an abſolute Security from temporal Evils and Afflictions, becauſe God oftentimes ſees it convenient to lay Sorrows upon his choiceſt and moſt favourite Servants for their Good; ſo that they muſt taſte of That which, to Fleſh and Blood, is a bitter Cup. Now, when theſe Calamities do befal us, certainly they are very burthenſome to human Nature; and, if we have not Aſſiſtance from *Religion*, we know not how to bear them with any Temper. We may be but too plainly convinced of this by obſerving what many Perſons will do, how they will ſacrifize their Conſcience, and riſk their eternal Happineſs, to avoid them, or to get rid of them; and, therefore, it muſt needs be a great Happineſs to be delivered from the Burden of ſuch ſad Accidents as human Foreſight cannot teach us to ſhun, nor human Power enable us to remove: Nor, is it only our *Happineſs*, but our *Duty* alſo, thus patiently to ſubmit, and take off our bitter Portion with a chearful Reſignation: God has poſitively commanded us not to murmur, or repine, but with all Readineſs and Alacrity to receive his Chaſtiſements, and *to count it all Joy when we fall into diverſe Temptations, knowing that the Tryal of our Faith worketh Patience.* This was the Practice of the bleſſed *Apoſtles*, who were *tranſported* by their Sufferings for CHRIST; not into *Deſpair*, nor an *inveterate Hatred* of the Rod that ſmote them, but into *triumphant Exultation*, and the moſt *flaming Love* of their Maſter, who *counted* them worthy

worthy to ſuffer in his Name. This muſt be *our* Practice, too, if we expect to arrive at thoſe happy Regions, where They who ſuffer for the *chriſtian* Faith, or, any ways, in the Diſcharge of their Duty, ſhall be glorified together with CHRIST. But, *how* is this abſolute Reſignation, this neceſſary Duty, poſſible to him that does not practiſe the Duty of *Prayer?* He *kicks* againſt the Pricks; he makes his Misfortunes gall him the more by bearing the Yoke with Impatience: Whereas, he that *prays* to *God* in his Diſtreſs, knowing, that it is the Will of his heavenly Father that he ſhould be afflicted, ſubmits his *Soul* and *Body* to his Diſpoſal; begs *his* Aſſiſtance to enable him to bear the Croſs, and, *then*, is heartily willing to take it upon his Shoulders: *He* conſiders that *God* is his *Friend*, who intends, and acts, for his *Benefit*; and, by frequent Converſe with his *Friend* in *Prayer*, he becomes ſo thoroughly ſatisfied of his real Love, and Kindneſs towards him, that he never utters a repining Word, or entertains a diſcontented Thought. Knowing that he has uſed his beſt Endeavours, if God ſees fit that he ſhould be diſappointed, he does not deſire that the Ends of infinite Wiſdom ſhould be defeated: And, if at any time his Fortune be blaſted, his Family viſited with Sickneſs, or himſelf caſt upon a Bed of *Sorrows*; why, he is aſſured that Afflictions do not riſe out the *Duſt*, but are ſent for wiſe Purpoſes, by the ſupreme Governour of the World; and, therefore, he retires *within himſelf*; converſes with that God who laid the

Trouble

Trouble upon him; he tells him that he is entirely satisfied, begs such a Measure of his Grace as may sustain his loaded Mind from sinking under the Weight of its Burden.—Every one knows what a Relief it is to a Person in Affliction to have a faithful Friend, to whom he can freely unbosom himself, especially if he be such a one as he knows to be both able and willing, to assist him. What infinite Satisfaction and Comfort, then, must it be to an afflicted Soul to unbosom itself to its dear Redeemer and omnipotent God; who, alone, is able, and who is most certainly willing to help it, either by removing the Complaint, or turning it to a spiritual Advantage, and amply rewarding it in another World. Under these Circumstances of Distress, let us imagine some such Conversation as this, between God and the afflicted Soul. "The Soul, by *Prayer*, laments its sad Condi-
"tion, lays open all its Complaints and Griev-
"ances, acknowledges the Justice, and mag-
"nifies the Love of God, in thus dealing with
"him, humbly imploring the divine Assistance
"to comfort, support, and relieve it." In answer to this Address, God, by the Holy Scriptures (which the Soul by Faith applies to itself) and the secret Suggestions of his Spirit, "Testifies
"his sincere Affection; kindly declares the
"*Reasons* of his laying on the Burden, with an
"Assurance that it shall continue no longer than
"Mercy itself shall see necessary; comforts it
"with Promises of sufficient Assistance, and
"shews it the Glory of that Crown which shall

"be

" be the Reward of a patient Submiſſion." In ſuch a Caſe, is it poſſible for a Perſon to be impatient, to be dejected after ſuch a Converſation with *God?* All the black Clouds of Melancholy and Deſpair are diſpell'd by the *Light of his Countenance*, and a bright Sun-ſhine enſues. Or, if the Storm be broke, and beats down with the utmoſt Vehemence, God ſhelters it under the Wings of his all-ſaving Mercy; amidſt all the Roaring of the Thunders, the Flaſhes of Lightning, and Rattling of the Rain, an inexpreſſible Calmneſs ſpreads itſelf over the Mind, a Serenity of Temper refreſhes and ſmooths it, every riſing Murmur is huſh'd, every repining Thought quaſh'd, and all the Paſſions of the Soul diſcharg'd in a Torrent of Love and Admiration; the moſt intenſe Love, the moſt perfectly ſatisfying Admiration of God and his Goodneſs. Can any Exſtacy of the Soul equal this? And may not this Enjoyment be attained by *Prayer*, by *intenſe* and *fervent* Prayer? Yes, bleſſed be God's Grace! it may; the truly *pious* and *religious* Man *knows*, and *feels*, that it may; he is convinced by the *ſweeteſt Experience*, that Submiſſion to God by *Prayer* is the higheſt Delight, that human Nature is capable of enjoying on this ſide Heaven.—And now, what is the *dry Reading*, and *cold Meditation*, recommended to us by the *Deiſts*, inſtead of *Prayer*, to this animating, this inflaming Exerciſe? And how can theſe *Hypocrites* have the Aſſurance to expect to be thought *Friends* to *Mankind*, when they attempt to deprive them of the moſt exalted Plea-

ſure,

ſure, and the moſt powerful Remedy for the Evils of Life? Or how can they pretend to ſerve the Intereſt of *Virtue*, while they endeavour to deſtroy the moſt effectual Means of ſupporting it?

It were eaſy to ſhew, that, without frequent and earneſt *Prayer*, it is *as* impoſſible to bear *Proſperity* with an even Mind, as it is to ſupport ourſelves under *Adverſity*. I might have ſaid *more*, eſpecially, where it is *ſudden* and *unexpected*. There are many good Reaſons to be aſſign'd for this. The Mind is more *weakened* and *enervated* by *Proſperity*, than by *Adverſity*. When People are in *Diſtreſs*, they are naturally *compoſed* and *thoughtful*: A Flow of *Proſperity diſſipates* Thought, and puts the Spirits in a *Ferment*; adds a great Quantity of *Sail*, while it leſſens the *Baláſt*, and renders the Mind more liable to be overſet. Under *Adverſity*, Men have not, either the *Inclination*, or the *Opportunity* to *take Pleaſure*, and gratify their *Luſts*. *Proſperity* gives both *Appetite* and *Capacity*. A State of *Adverſity*, where there is a tolerable Diſpoſition, *ſoftens* and *humbles* the Mind; *Proſperity* diſpoſes to *Pride* and an *Unconcernedneſs* for others, to *Cruelty* and *Oppreſſion*. I could ſay a great deal more, but the little that I have ſaid, may ſerve to ſhew how much the *Rich* and *Proſperous* ſtand in need of the Aſſiſtance of *Prayer*, to keep them within the Bounds of Duty. But, their greateſt Misfortune of all is, that the more they ſtand in need of it, the leſs they are inclin'd to make uſe of it. When People are in

a *forlorn* Condition they naturally *desire*, and *seek* for *Help*; and if they have no Prospect of finding it on *Earth*, they will look up to *Heaven* for it: But, the *Successful* and the *Wealthy*, abounding with every thing, are apt to forget *God*, their *great Benefactor*, to whom they *owe* every thing; and, while their Temptations make them the more in want of his Grace, they are the more apt to slight it. But,

Thirdly, The Exercise of *Prayer* is necessary in order to the Practice of the Duty of *loving our Enemies*—Forgiveness of Enemies is a Lesson which Mankind can hardly learn; it is a Yoke to which they do very unwillingly submit their Necks: There is something within us which makes our Hearts rise and swell, and our Blood boil, whenever we receive an Injury, or Affront; and it is very difficult for us to subdue this Turbulency, and keep down angry Resentments: But, it is utterly impossible for a *mere Man* so FAR to conquer himself, as to make his *bitter Enemy* the Object of his *Love*; to be *kind* and *tender-hearted* to, and be willing to do all good Offices for, the Person who has loaded him with Injustice, *&c.* And, yet, this difficult Thing *must* be done, if we ever expect Forgiveness at the Hands of *God*. It is absolutely required as an express Condition, so that there is a Necessity of working ourselves up to this charitable Temper, and such a Principle of universal Love within us, as will make no Exceptions, but equally and constantly exert itself towards *Enemies* and *Friends*. Now, this Principle can never be ac-

quired and implanted in our Breasts without the Practice of *Prayer*, and for two Reasons. For, first, *Prayer* disposes us to that excellent Frame of Spirit. It is the Corruption of our Flesh, and the Sensuality of our Nature, which cause Resentment, and a Desire of Revenge; and, therefore, when this Principle is weakened, the contrary gathers Strength. When our Nature is *spiritualiz'd*, those evil Affections cease. Now, *Prayer*, as I have observed already, is the only Way by which we can *refine* our Nature, draw off the Dregs of original Sin, purge it from its Dross, and make it more like *God*, of an *angelic* Kind. In the Exercise of *Prayer*, we bewail our *own Enmity to God*; we beg *Him* to *pardon*, and *love* us who were, and are still, in some measure his Enemies; *Prayer*, therefore, has a *natural Tendency* to soften our Hearts, and dispose us to grant That Forgiveness, of which we, ourselves, stand so much in need. For, what can more *naturally tend* to make us ready to forgive others, than a frequent Acknowledgement of our own Offences against God? Or, how can we be extreme to mark what is amiss in our *Brother*, when, by *daily Prayer*, we are constantly reminded of our own Sinfulness? Shall we dare to be inexorable, or to meditate Revenge, when we acknowledge that we are Criminals ourselves, and, perhaps, *greater* Criminals *upon the whole*, tho' less culpable in particular Articles: *Prayer*, therefore, in the *natural Effects* of it, will help to make us of a more candid, and forgiving Temper; and, if we do

not

not *feel* these Effects in the Performance of it, it is because we do not pray with *Sincerity*.

But *Prayer* is not only necessary in some particular *Parts* of Religion, but *all* Religion, in *general*, depends upon it; which will appear abundantly plain if we consider—1. That no Man whatsoever *can* be good *without* Prayer. —2. That a Man will necessarily grow bad if he *neglects* it, and his Neglect be *wilful*—3. That no Man can long *continue* bad that takes due Care in praying to God.

1*st*, I say, no Man whatsoever can be good *without Prayer*, and that for two Reasons.—*First*, because, as I observed before, the Consideration of God's Attributes, his Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Purity, *&c.* are the greatest Checks to sinful Inclinations. For, what Person, of common Sense, that gives himself Leisure for a sober Thought, can dare to be very wicked in the Company, and before the Face, of that great God, who sees, and hates, what he does, and will assuredly punish him for it! Reflections upon these divine Attributes must unavoidably damp a Sinner, and deaden his irregular Passions, unless he be arrived to such a consummate Pitch of Impudence that he *cares* not for God; or, with the Psalmist's Fool, says in *his Heart*, *there is no God*, tho' he would be *thought* to acknowledge his Existence and Government. Now, he that does *not pray*, does most certainly lose the best Opportunity for serious Consideration upon God's Nature, because he omits that Action, in the due Performance of which

which a Man cannot *but* have the moſt intenſe Contemplation of the Deity; and, therefore, we have all imaginable Reaſon to believe that thoſe who omit their *Prayers* do ſeldom find themſelves at leiſure, or diſpoſed, for ſerious Meditation on theſe Subjects; conſequently, all ſuch Perſons muſt want that Check which thinking on God's Attributes muſt give them. How, then, is it poſſible for them to be *Religious* and *Virtuous?* To attain the *End* without the Uſe of the neceſſary *Means? Nature* is very corrupt and weak, *Temptations* are very numerous and ſtrong; evil Spirits are very cunning and active, and able to give Temptations an additional Force: And *can* Man then, or *will* he reſiſt Temptations, notwithſtanding their natural Strength, aided by the grand Enemy, while he neglects the proper Means of Reſiſtance? No. He *will*, and *muſt*, be gradually carried down the Stream of Corruption, into an Ocean of Sin and Wickedneſs.

2*dly*, No Man can, in any meaſure, be good without God's Grace aſſiſting him, the very weakeſt of our Inclinations being too ſtrong for our *natural* Abilities to conquer. *Heaven* muſt be called into our Defence, or elſe we muſt yield ourſelves Captives. This is the expreſs Doctrine of the *Goſpel*; this is the Language of our *Articles*, and *Liturgy*; this is a Truth acknowledged by *all Chriſtians*. But, how, can the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace be obtained without *Prayer*, becauſe we cannot expect it without *aſking* for it? This is another Truth as clearly

laid down by *Scripture*, and our *Church*, and as univerſally aſſented to. God promiſes Grace. Says he, *aſk and ye ſhall have*; which carries an *Implication* as ſtrong as the moſt *poſitive Aſſertion*, that *without aſking*, God will not give it us: From whence it follows, that without *Prayer* it is impoſſible for a Man to be a *good* CHRISTIAN.

The next Aſſertion that I laid down is this, *i. e.* That, as a Man grows in Grace by his conſtant Attendance on *Prayer*, and his due Performance of that Duty, ſo in Proportion as he *neglects* to pray, or prays in an undue Manner, he will gradually *decline* in *Religion* and *Virtue*. This is evident from the Nature of Things. As *bad* Habits, unleſs reſtrained, will grow ſtronger and ſtronger by Exerciſe; ſo good ones, without conſtant Exerciſe, and continual Supplies to forward their Growth, will daily grow weaker and weaker. Now, as has been ſhewn, theſe freſh Supplies of Grace cannot be obtained without *daily praying* for Them; and, conſequently, he that does not regularly and duly perform the Duty of *Prayer*, which is the moſt nouriſhing Food of the Soul, does, as I may ſay, *ſtarve* it, and thereby weaken its ſpiritual Strength; his Virtues languiſh, and at laſt for want of Recruits and Aſſiſtance will expire; he returns into his natural State of Averſion to *God*, and *Goodneſs*, and, perhaps, *reſts* there without ſo much as attempting to recover himſelf. It is poſſible, I confeſs, that a Man who *habitually* neglects his Prayers, may not be ſo debauched as to be *notoriouſly*

toriouſly wicked, and guilty of the moſt ſcandalous Enormities; ſuch as habitual Drunkenneſs, and Whoredom; Swearing, Curſing, and Damning himſelf and his Neighbours (tho' in This Caſe, he cannot anſwer for himſelf, that he ſhall not, by degrees, be led into Them;) yet, without ſuch an *extraordinary* Degree of God's Grace, as no Man who has ſo long neglected to aſk for it, has any good Reaſon to expect, he muſt be void of *all Religion*, notwithſtanding, and in a State of the moſt imminent Danger. There are many Perſons whom *God*, for *wiſe* and *good* Reaſons, does not *ſuffer* to be tempted; or the *Devil*, for *malicious* Reaſons, *will not* tempt them to be guilty of ſuch *outrageous* Wickedneſs. *God* reſtrains, becauſe he will not ſuffer them to do ſo much Miſchief by their *Examples*; the *Devil* may not uſe all his Power, in hopes, by That Means, to be able the more effectually to ruin others by a leſs notorious, and ſcandalous Degree of Impiety: Such Perſons, tho' not arrived to the higheſt Pitch of *Iniquity*, do, notwithſtanding, want every, the *ſmalleſt* Grain of *Religion*; tho' They have not ſo much *actual Wickedneſs*, They have every whit as little *Goodneſs*, as the moſt debauched *Atheiſts*. Nay, many Perſons make a decent Appearance in the World, and paſs for *tolerably good* People, who, nevertheleſs, are utterly deſtitute of all *true Godlineſs*. For, what *is* true Godlineſs? It is not a *tolerable Outſide*; it does not conſiſt in abſtaining from the *worſt of Crimes*; it is not *mere Sobriety*, or *Chaſtity*, or any ſuch *outward* Thing;

it is an *inward Diſpoſition* of the *Heart*; it is a *fixt*, a *ſteady*, a *quick* and *active Deſire*, to the utmoſt of our Power, to conform ourſelves to the Likeneſs of *God's* Nature, and to obſerve all his Commands; it is a *living Principle* that will exert itſelf upon all proper Occaſions; it is *That* whereby we take *delight* in *ſpiritual* Things, and impatiently *covet* after them; and, like holy *David*, *long* and *pant* after God. *This* is Godlineſs, *This* is being truly Religious; and thus muſt *we* endeavour to be if ever we expect to aſſociate with juſt Men made perfect in *Heaven*: Before we can be qualify'd for *their* Acquaintance, or *their* Employments, we muſt reſemble Them in their *Sentiments* and *Diſpoſitions*; before we can be capable of *ſeeing God*, we muſt be *Holy even as he his Holy*. And can ſuch Sentiments and Diſpoſitions, as theſe, be *acquired*, or *preſerved*, without *Prayer*? Can any one *continue* to *delight* in God without *converſing* with him? Can any one love *Heaven* above all Things who neglects an Acquaintance with That God, whoſe immediate Preſence *makes* Heaven to be what it is? A Man may become an *Atheiſt* for want of *praying*, but, I am ſure, he cannot be *truly holy* without *praying*; for, no ſooner does he *ceaſe* to *pray*, but his Piety leſſens of courſe; his Love of God is diminiſhed, and his Religion moulders away and grows feeble, faints, and dies.

3*dly*, No Man can long continue in a State of *deliberate*, *wilful* Sin, who *continually prays*: I do not mean the *formal* Act of Prayer, but *attentive* and *fervent* Prayer. As to the proper

Manner

Manner of performing This great Duty, I ſhall conſider it more at large in another Part of This Diſcourſe. At preſent, I will only ſuppoſe a Man to believe that there is ſuch a Being as he profeſſes in his Prayers to believe; That God is infinitely Pure and Holy; that, in conſequence of his own Nature, he muſt be a determined Enemy to all Vice, and will puniſh it. Let us, then, ſuppoſe that *ſuch* a Man (for as to *Infidels*, or Perſons who make no Uſe of their *Underſtanding*, and act without *meaning* any thing by what They do, They are quite out of the Queſtion) lives in the *Habit* of any *known* Sin, or *frequently* lapſes into *ſingle* Acts of groſs Immorality, and, yet, daily, in a moſt ſolemn Manner, falls upon his Knees before God, acknowledges his Guilt and Folly, and the *Reaſonableneſs* of God's Laws; *humbly* and *ſorrowfully* aſks Pardon, and promiſes *Amendment:* Is it poſſible for him long to continue in ſuch a Contraſt of *daily Confeſſion*, and *deliberate* Sin? No. He *muſt* reform, or leave off *Praying*. Put the Caſe of an undutiful *Child*, Day after Day, acknowledging his Fault to an *indulgent*, but *wiſe* Father, who, he knows, will gladly receive him into Favour if he ſhews the Sincerity of his Repentance, by an actual Amendment, but puniſh him with the greater Severity for *continuing* in his Diſobedience, after ſo many repeated Acknowledgements and Promiſes. Would any one, that is not a *Madman*, or an *Ideot*, be able long to act ſuch a *Part?* It is *impoſſible*, *utterly* impoſſible. He would *ſhew* that he was in *earneſt*, or be

afraid, and *aſhamed* to appear before his Father any more. The Caſe between our *heavenly* Father and *us* is much ſtronger. *His* Laws being more righteous, they are better fitted to create *Shame* in *wilful* Offenders; *he* knows, more particularly, all the aggravating Circumſtances of our Guilt; his *Holineſs* muſt give him a ſtronger Deteſtation of it; his *Power* enables him to puniſh with more Severity; his *Immutability* leaves no room to hope for Pardon without a *Change* in *us*. A Man, therefore, who *daily confeſſes* his Sins *muſt* be ſo far ſincere as to *reſolve* upon a Reformation, and a *ſtrong Reſolution*, aided by God's Grace, (which he will certainly have if he humbly and importunately aſks for it) will enable him ſo far to put his good Reſolutions in Practice, as not *wilfully* to *continue* in the *Habit* of any *known* Sin, or *frequently* to fall into *occaſional* Acts of *very groſs* Sins. I apprehend This to be ſo very clear a Caſe that it needs no farther *Inlargement*; and with every ſincere Reader it needs no farther Inforcement: But, for a farther Encouragement to practiſe this Duty of *Prayer*, I ſhall ſhew how *acceptable* it is to *God*, and how *effectual* we may expect it to be to *ourſelves*, from *Declarations*, and *Examples* recorded in Holy Scripture. I have already ſhewn what *a natural Tendency* there is in *Prayer* to make us *religious* and *virtuous*, in Concurrence with the Grace of God aſſiſting us; this next Chapter will encourage us to *expect* God's Grace and Favour in Conſequence of our ſincere and hearty Prayers.

CHAP. VI.

Upon this Head there are three Things proper to be obſerved:

I. THAT God, in his holy Word, hath made the moſt expreſs Promiſes that he will hear the Prayers of good *Chriſtians.*

II. That he hath moſt remarkably made good theſe Promiſes, as appears by Variety of *Inſtances.*

III. That he hath declared that our *Prayers* are ſo neceſſary towards the Attainment of the good Things which we want, that without praying for them we ſhall not have them.

I. God hath given the moſt expreſs Declarations of his Readineſs to anſwer our Prayers. The Pſalmiſt ſaith, "The Lord is nigh unto all "them that call upon him in Truth; he will "fulfil the Deſires of thoſe that fear him; he "alſo will hear their Cry and help them." Again, "The Eyes of the Lord are over the "Righteous, and his Ears are open to their "Prayers." Again, he is ſtiled, "A God that "heareth Prayers." Again, he invites us to call upon him, promiſing Deliverance upon our Application to him; "Call upon me in the Time "of Trouble, and I will deliver thee." Theſe and many other Paſſages, to the like purpoſe, we find in the *Old* Teſtament, and the *New* is as full of Them. Our Saviour ſays to his Apoſtles, "Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my Name

" *that* will I do." Repeating it, " If ye ſhall " aſk any thing in my Name I will do it." Again, " Aſk and it ſhall be given you, *&c.* " for every one that aſketh receiveth, *&c.*" There are many other Declarations to the ſame Purpoſe, but theſe are ſufficient to prove the Acceptableneſs and Efficacy of *Prayer*; and they are confirmed by many *Examples* and Inſtances of it. Among others we have the following very remarkable ones:

The Prayer of *Moſes* quenched a devouring Fire.

The Prayer of *Elias* brought down Fire from Heaven.

The Prayer of *Eliſha* reſtored a dead Man to Life.

The Prayer of King *Hezekiah* ſlew 185000 of the *Aſſyrians* in one Night.

The Prayer of *David* ſtopped the deſtroying Angel when his Hand was lifted up to deſtroy *Jeruſalem.*

The Prayer of *Jonah* delivered him out of the Fiſh's Belly.

What a mighty Force the Scriptures attribute to *Prayer*, we may read in the Hiſtory of the Battle between the *Iſraelites*, and the *Amalekites*; how the *former* prevailed as long as *Moſes*'s Hands were lifted up in *Prayer*, and the *latter* when he let Them fall; another we have in the Story of *Jacob* wreſtling with the *Angel*, and prevailing by the Force of his *praying* for a *Bleſſing*. By the ſame Means *Moſes* prevented the Deſtruction of the *Iſraelites*, when God was going

going to *blot out their Name from under Heaven*, for making the golden Calf. If it be ſaid that theſe Examples ſignify nothing to *us*, who live at a Time when no Miracles can be expected, it may juſtly be anſwered, that they ſignify a good deal, becauſe, from ſuch *miraculous* Inſtances of the Effects of *Prayer*, we may draw a good Argument of its great Efficacy, at all *Times*, to the End of the World: For, if in thoſe Ages *Prayer* was ſo prevalent as to move God to leave the uſual Methods of his Providence, and to do Violence to the ſtated Order of Things, Have we not Reaſon to believe that he will anſwer thoſe Prayers which require no ſuch *extraordinary* Interpoſal, but fall within the Reach of the common Courſe of his Government?

3*dly*, For the farther Proof of the Efficacy of Prayer, it ought to be conſidered, that the Scriptures have declared it to be ſo neceſſary towards the Attainment of ſuch Things as we want, that if we do not pray for them we ſhall not have them. This is evident from St. *James*, who ſays, "Ye luſt and have not, ye kill and deſire to "have, and cannot obtain, becauſe ye *aſk* not." What can be plainer?

And now, Reader, whatever you be; whether Learned, or Unlearned; whether Rich, or Poor; in the Ebb of Adverſity, or the Flood of Proſperity; whether in a low, or in the moſt exalted Station; let me crave your Patience while I briefly *recapitulate* what has been ſaid upon this important, ſolemn Subject. *Prayer* has a *natural* Tendency to make us Religious and Virtuous;

Virtuous; it is recommended by the concurrent Opinion and Practice of all Ages, and Nations, of the moſt eminent and improved Perſons, recorded in *Scripture*; *Prophets*, *Apoſtles*, and even our *bleſſed Saviour himſelf*, that *great Exemplar* after which all CHRISTIANS are obliged to copy. It has the Sanction of the moſt poſitive *Precepts* from *God*, with an Aſſurance that our Prayers are a moſt acceptable Service: There are Variety of *Inſtances* and *Examples* of this in Scripture; it not only has a Tendency to improve us in *Religion* and *Virtue*, but it is ſo *neceſſary* towards our Improvement, that it is impoſſible to be *truly* Religious and Virtuous without it, or long to *continue* in a State of *habitual* Wickedneſs, or often to commit groſs Sins, while we *habituate* ourſelves to the Practice of it: It is an Exerciſe, in *its Nature*, the moſt delightful, the moſt comfortable, and the moſt honourable; nothing is ſo well fitted to make us eaſy and happy in all Circumſtances of Life, by regulating all our diſorderly Paſſions, and creating a perpetual Tranquillity and Serenity of Mind: It is, moreover, abſolutely neceſſary towards qualifying ourſelves for the Society, and Employment of the Inhabitants of *Heaven*, where all *Chriſtians* expect to live for ever. I make no *declamatory* Addreſs to your *Paſſions*, but a *cool* Appeal to *ſober Reaſon*, and *common Senſe*. If theſe things be ſo (and that they are, is moſt certainly true) what can we think of the *trifling Indifferency* with which a great Part of Mankind treat this Duty? If this Book ſhould happen to fall

fall into the Hands of any ſuch unthinking Wretches, I heartily beg of God, that, thro' his aſſiſting Grace, it may awaken them into a more ſerious Conſideration of an Affair that deſerves their cloſeſt Attention.

Having ſpoken thus largely of the Effects of Prayer in general, I ſhall now diſtinctly conſider the particular Advantages *peculiar* to *private* and *publick* Prayer.

CHAP VII.

The Duty *and* Advantages PECULIAR *to* private *and* publick *Prayer*, diſtinctly *conſidered.*

I. LET us conſider what *peculiar* Circumſtances of Advantage attend *private* Prayer. One very conſiderable one is this, it gives us an Opportunity of knowing the *Sincerity* of our Hearts. The Heart of Man is ſo treacherous that he often deceives *himſelf*, as well as the World, and makes himſelf believe that he is acting upon a *religious* Motive, while he is influenced by Views of *Intereſt*, or a Principle of *Vain-Glory:* Like the *Phariſees* of old, he prays in *Publick* that he *may be ſeen of Men*, out of Cuſtom, Decency, or ſome worldly Motive; and this Obſervation more particularly concerns thoſe whoſe *Stations* compel them to attend publick Worſhip; ſuch as Students at the *Univerſities*, and Perſons belonging to *Cathedrals.* And there

there is ſtill more Reaſon to ſuſpect ſome Principle of this Sort, when a Perſon does not regularly attend *publick* Worſhip, as often as he has an Opportunity, but neglects it upon frivolous Pretences. Every *true* Principle is *uniform*, and will always operate regularly, and equally, whenever it is not neceſſarily obſtructed; if *Religion* carries a Man to Church at *one* time, the ſame Motive will aſſurdly have the ſame Effect at *any other* Opportunity, unleſs he be hindered by want of *Health*, ſome Work of *Neceſſity*, or *Charity*: If he uſually attends the Service on *Sunday-Mornings*, and as uſually abſents himſelf in the *Afternoon*; or, if he be conſtant both Parts of the *Sunday*, and never, or very ſeldom, attends the Prayers on the *Week-Day* when he has a fitting Opportunity: In all theſe Caſes the Man impoſes upon himſelf, if he fanſies that when he goes to *Church* he goes upon a *genuine*, *unadulterated* Principle of *Religion*. But, when we addreſs ourſelves to God in our *Cloſets*, where no Eye, but that of *God*, can ſee what we are doing, *then* we may be aſſured that we act upon a ſincere Senſe of *Duty*, without any *Mixture* of *worldly* Views; for this Reaſon it was that our Saviour directs us to ſhut out the Obſervation of all other Witneſſes of our Devotions, that we may pray to our Father who ſeeth in *ſecret*, and will reward us *openly*: And, therefore, whoever neglects to worſhip God in his *Cloſet*, does not worſhip him at *Church* upon a *true Senſe* of *Religion*, tho' he *may* have ſome *ſlight* and *imperfect* Notions of his Obligations; I ſay, he can have no well

well grounded Conviction of his Duty upon rational Evidence. It was this *private* Prayer in which our Lord ſo much delighted; a *Mountain*, a *Deſart*, or a *Garden*, were the Places which he choſe for ſuch Prayers; and that he might be ſtill more ſecret, he made choice of ſuch Times when the Darkneſs of the Night covered him from Obſervation; *a great while before Day he went out and departed into a ſolitary Place*, and *there prayed*; at another Time, *he continued all Night in Prayer to God*; and his *Example* muſt be as infallible as his *Word*, and binds us as ſtrongly to the Uſe of *private* Prayer, tho' our Strength and Spirits will not enable us to continue ſo long in Prayer at any one Time; nor can we have the like urgent Occaſion, or Opportunity, conſiſtently with our preſent State, and Condition.

2. *Private* Worſhip has this particular Advantage attending it, that it is a plainer Teſtimony of our Belief of God's *Omniſcience*, than *publick* Devotions, this being the *only* Foundation of our *ſecret* Addreſſes: And, as the Worſhip of God in *ſecret* is founded upon a Belief of God's *Omniſcience*, and can have *no other* Support, ſo the conſtant Exerciſe of it is naturally apt to make the Senſe of his Omniſcience always lively in our Minds; than which nothing can be a more probable Means of reſtraining us from all Sorts of Sins, more eſpecially thoſe Sins which Men are, of all others, the moſt liable to be tempted to; I mean, *ſecret* Sins.

3.

3. Another great Advantage *peculiar* to *private* Prayer is this, That we may be more *particular*, than it is poſſible to be in *publick* Prayer, which can be adapted only to the *general* State of Mankind; we are, all of us, equally God's *Creatures*, and, therefore, it is fit that as many of us as can conveniently aſſemble together ſhould *unite* in acknowledging him to be our *common Father*; every one of us are equally ſupported by him, and, therefore, we ought to *join* in thanking him for the Mercies and Bleſſings which, in *common*, we receive from him. We are, all, *Sinners*, and *publick* Sinners, and, therefore, it is meet that we ſhould *publickly*, and *jointly*, confeſs our ſinful State: We have a great many *common Wants* which we *may*, and *ſhould*, agree to requeſt of him: But, every one is daily receiving *particular Bleſſings*; every one has *particular Wants*; every one is guilty of *private* Sins, and ſubject to *particular Temptations*: Now, it is impoſſible that all theſe *particular* Circumſtances, *peculiar* to each of us, ſhould be made the Subject of our *publick* Devotions, and, therefore, we can offer theſe Prayers *only* in our *private Cloſets*, where each one may adapt them to his *own* Caſe; ſo that, if we attend the *publick* Service of the *Church* ever ſo conſtantly, there will be ſtill a Neceſſity for *daily*, *private*, Devotions, in order to confeſs thoſe Sins which we *committed* in *private*, to thank God for thoſe *particular* Bleſſings which we have received, beſides thoſe which we enjoy in *common* with other People; and thus it is with

with regard to every *other* Part of *Prayer*; we are as much obliged to make thoſe things, which relate to *ourſelves*, ONLY, the Subject of our *private* Addreſſes to God, as we are to *join* in thoſe Parts which concern *all* Mankind *equally*. And being thus *particular* in our Acknowledgements, either of *Mercies*, and *Bleſſings*, or *Sins*, it muſt have a much ſtronger Effect upon our Minds than reſting in *Generals*. Let us examine a little how this Matter ſtands: Suppoſe a Perſon does me a *ſingular* Favour, that is of very great Service to me, and ſuch as he does not *uſually* beſtow upon his Neighbours, and Acquaintance, in the common Intercourſe of Life. Well; I take an Opportunity of *joining* with *many others*, who are under Obligations to him for the *common* Offices of Kindneſs which he has ſhewn to us *all*, without taking a *private* Opportunity to thank him, *particularly*, for the *uncommon* Kindneſs which he has ſhewn to *me*, on ſuch an Occaſion. This, indeed, would be *ſomething*, but not *enough* to ſatisfy my *ſingular* Obligations, and to diſpoſe me to entertain ſuch a ſtrong Senſe of Gratitude as will produce a ſuitable Return of Behaviour in me: But, let us ſuppoſe that I go directly to him, and *privately* tell him, what a ſtrong Senſe I have of this *extraordinary* Inſtance of his Friendſhip to me, expatiating upon the Circumſtances that heighten the Obligation, aſſuring him what very great Service it did me, how unworthy I was of it, and how ſtudious I ſhall always be, to ſhew my Gratitude by a reſpectful, and obliging, Behaviour.

Behaviour. I ask, now, any sober Person living, whether this *particular* Acknowledgement in *private* be not more effectual than a *general* one, *in company* with others, where we only declare that he has been very kind to *us all*; whether my Friend would not expect it from me; and whether it would not more strongly excite Gratitude in me, and make me the more careful to please him? Or, if I have *privately* done a *particular* Injury to this very kind Friend, or *endeavoured*, or *intended*, to do it, and it, some way, or other, comes to his Knowledge, should I only go along with *several others*, who have, likewise, injured, or affronted him, where I could have no Opportunity of mentioning *my particular* Offence, but only *join* with *them* in owning our *common* Offences, and asking his Pardon: Would he think this a sufficient Satisfaction? Or would this *general* Confession be equally efficacious towards creating in my Mind a proper Sense of Shame, and Sorrow, and a Resolution to behave better for the future? I say, would this have the same Effect as if I went by myself, laid open all the aggravating Circumstances of my Guilt, and humbled myself in Words, and Gestures, that may be more suitable than such as I could decently use in *publick*, where the Publick are ignorant of the Fact, and of the Nature and Circumstances of it, and ought to be *kept* ignorant? I think this is so obvious a Case, that I may trust the most ordinary Understanding with the Determination of it, and leave him to draw the plain Comparison between this Case,

and that of the *ſingular Mercies* which we receive from God, and our *particular Offences* committed againſt Him. This Method I would adviſe to be put in practice in the following Manner: To give an habitual Attention to our Thoughts, and Words, and Actions. This may be done in any Station of Life whatſoever. There may be ſome Difficulty in doing it, eſpecially at firſt, but by degrees it will grow more and more eaſy. This will bring us acquainted with ourſelves, naturally increaſe our Watchfulneſs, and be the Means of *preventing* Sins, as well as of reclaiming us from the *Repetition* of them. Whenever we catch ourſelves at a Fault, if it be the Reſult of *natural Infirmity*, it may be ſufficient for ſuch Eſcapes, if we immediately lift up our *Minds* to God (which may be done in *Company*) in a *penitential Ejaculation*. If the Fault be more *deliberate* and *wilful*, or the *Repetition* of one that we have often committed, we ſhould not only lift our Minds to God at that Inſtant, but lay it up carefully in our *Memories*, and before we go to Bed weigh the Circumſtances of it, and make a particular and ſolemn Acknowledgment of it. I add farther, that in the Caſe of *very notorious* Sins, ſuch as that of *David*'s, or an Eſcape from imminent Danger of our Lives, we ſhould not content ourſelves with a ſingle Acknowledgment, but make it an Article in our daily Prayers in our *Cloſets*. I would recommend the ſame Method in regard to *Temptations*. Every one has ſomething in his *Conſtitution*, or *Situation*, that ſubjects him to *parti-*

cular Temptations, and, therefore, in our *Closets*, we should be *particular* in begging God's Grace to inable us to resist them. A Person naturally inclin'd to *Lasciviousness*, should daily pray for *Chastity*; the *Proud*, for *Humility*; the *Cholerick*, for *Meekness*, &c. The same Course should be taken in respect to such Sins as we are in most danger of from our *Circumstances* in Life. The *Rich* should pray, *particularly*, against the *natural* and *usual* Consequences of Riches upon the Minds and Manners of Men, and for a Disposition to make a good use of them. Persons, in the more *elevated* Stations of Life, and intrusted with Power and Influence, are subject to more and greater Temptations, either to *abuse* their Trust, or to *neglect* the due Discharge of it; *They* stand in need of more Watchfulness, and more Assistance from God's Grace; and, therefore, it is incumbent upon them to ask, *particularly*, for those Virtues which are necessary to the Discharge of their great Trust; and, above all, that God would give them a *true*, *publick* Spirit, an inflamed Zeal for the Honour of God, the Interest of his Religion, and the Good of Mankind; such a Zeal as may guard them from *low* and *mean* Views; and I call *all* Views low and mean, which are inconsistent with those great ones that I have just now mentioned. I chuse not to be more particular in explaining myself: Those honest Readers who are disposed to make a good Use of a Hint, will take it, the rest will only be provok'd to Resentment. But before I quit this Head, I must desire the Rea-

der to apply what I have ſaid concerning Men's *particular Sins*, and *Temptations*, to Sins of *Omiſſion*, which I apprehend to be much more numerous than thoſe of *Commiſſion*, becauſe they are more likely to eſcape our Notice, and, conſequently, *we* more likely to lapſe into them.

Another Advantage I ſhall barely mention, becauſe it requires no Inlargement upon it: Every one has *particular Friends* and *Benefactors*, whom a generous and affectionate Mind would be glad, in a *particular Manner*, to recommend to the Bleſſing of God; which can be done *only* in our *private* Devotions, ſince no *Common-Prayer* can deſcend to *ſuch Particulars*.

And thus having mentioned the principal Advantages *peculiar* to *private* Prayer, I ſhall ſubjoin a neceſſary Caution. Our bleſſed Saviour has directed us to make our *private* Devotions as *ſecret* as poſſible; but this Direction muſt not be followed to the *Neglect* of ſuch Prayers. *As far* as poſſible we ſhould make them *ſecret*, but *make* them we *muſt*, though we ſhould have no Opportunity of retiring from the Notice of every human Eye. Such Circumſtances may, and often do, happen; and, in theſe Caſes, it will be no phariſaical Oſtentation, if we ſuffer others to ſee us upon our Knees addreſſing ourſelves to God, but a neceſſary Piece of Juſtice to *Religion*, and to *ourſelves*; but, then, what paſſes between God and us may be *ſecret*, for we need not ſpeak ſo as to be heard by any one; or we may only direct our *Minds* to God without ſpeaking at all.

Theſe are the *principal* Advantages *peculiar* to *private* Prayer: As to thoſe which are *peculiar* to *publick* Prayer, I ſhall take the Liberty of ſetting them forth in a Tranſcript from that moſt excellent Preacher and ſound Divine, as well as pious *Chriſtian*, Archbiſhop *Sharp*, Vol. 4. p. 157. " It is the Fault of a great many, and " even of ſome that have otherwiſe an hearty " Senſe of Religion, that they have not *that* " Eſteem and Value for the *publick* Worſhip of " God, that, in the Nature of Things, it doth " call for. If they do but ſay their Prayers de- " voutly in their *Cloſets*, (and I would to God " that all Perſons did that) they think they have " done enough; all that is needful for the Diſ- " charge of that Part of their Duty which con- " cerns the *Worſhip* of *God*. The *Church* Prayers, " and, likewiſe, Prayers in their *Families*, they " can well enough ſpare. And tho' they do, " perhaps, now and then attend the publick " Worſhip, yet it is not ſo much for the Sake " of the *Prayers*, as for the Curioſity of hearing " a Sermon; or, it may be, for the avoiding the " Scandal that their Abſence at ſuch Times " would bring upon them. But, certainly, this " is far from being a right Notion of the Wor- " ſhip of God; ſo far from it, that I muſt ſay " it is a very abſurd one. We do own, that to " ſerve God in *private*, is a neceſſary Duty; " nay, ſo neceſſary, that there is no living an " holy *Chriſtian* Life without it. We own, " likewiſe, that as the Thing is infinitely rea- " ſonable in itſelf, ſo it is attended with Advan-

" tages

" tages of various Sorts (ſome of which I have
" mentioned); but, then, we ſay, that *publick*
" Prayer, joining with our Brethren in the Ser-
" vice of God, whether it be at *Church*, or in
" our own *Families*, muſt needs have the Pre-
" eminence in abundance of Reſpects. Give
" me leave to name a few of them. Would
" we take the readieſt Courſe to have our Prayers
" effectual, in order to obtain from God what
" we pray for? Why, certainly, then, we muſt
" pray with *other* devout People that come to-
" gether to obtain the ſame thing that *we* de-
" ſire. In common Reaſon one would think,
" that the *united* Force of a *Number* joining to-
" gether to make a Requeſt, ſhould have more
" Power than a Petition from a *ſingle* Perſon,
" whoever he be that is addreſſed. But, we
" have more cauſe to think ſo with reference to
" thoſe Prayers that we make to *God* in *publick*,
" *Chriſt Jeſus* having given us his Promiſe, that
" *wherever two or three of us are gathered toge-*
" *ther in his Name, there he will be in the midſt*
" *of us.* Not but that He will be preſent to
" every devout Perſon that prays as he ſhould
" do; but the Promiſe is more expreſs to thoſe
" who join their Prayers together. Nay, our
" Saviour, even when the Occaſion led Him to
" diſcourſe of *private* Prayer, ſuch as ought to
" be performed in the *Cloſet*, yet, being to give
" a *Form* of Prayer, He delivers it in ſuch
" Words as are moſt proper to be uſed in a
" *Congregation*, ſpeaking in the plural Number,

" *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. intima-
" ting hereby, that it was his Design that *all* his
" Disciples should *join* together in Prayer.——
" But this is not all.—Do we think it our Duty
" to pay *Honour* to God in our Devotions, to
" give *Him* the Glory that is due unto His
" Name? Why, certainly, this is never *so pro-*
" *perly* done, as when we *assemble* together with
" our *Fellow-Christians*, to express our Depen-
" dance upon Him, and to set forth his Praise.
" In true Speaking, to give *Honour* and *Glory*
" to God, is *publishing* to *others* the Sense we
" have of his adorable Perfections, of his infinite
" Kindness and Beneficence, and of the conti-
" nual Need we stand in of his Bounty; but
" this can be done no way so effectually, as by
" *joining* in the Expression of those Things with
" the religious Assemblies of our Brethren. Nor,
" indeed, can we be more properly said to *serve*
" God by our Devotions in *private*, than we
" can be said to *honour* Him; and yet, all of us
" think there is some Service due from us to
" *God*; and we think, likewise, that we serve
" Him by our *Prayers*. This is so common
" and obvious a Notion, that if a Man does but
" hear the *Service* of *God* mentioned, he is na-
" turally apt to apply that Word to *praying* to,
" and *worshipping* Him, as looking upon That
" as the principal Part of the *Service* which we
" owe Him. Why, this is true; but praying
" to God in *private*, is doing Him no *Service*,
" in the proper Sense of the Word; there we

" rather

" rather ſerve *ourſelves* than *God Almighty* *.
" To *ſerve* one, is properly to promote the *In-*
" *tereſt* of that Perſon whom we pretend to
" *ſerve*; to do his Buſineſs with all thoſe among
" whom we are employ'd. This now is truly
" and properly done in reſpect to *God*, when
" we reſort to the *publick Aſſemblies* to pay our
" Devotions and Acknowledgements to Him;
" for, by that means, we really do *our* Part, that
" *all* the World ſhould honour, and fear, and
" worſhip God, as well as ourſelves; nay, and
" we contribute a great deal to the keeping up
" a Senſe of Religion among *Men*, which is the
" trueſt Service that we can pay to *God*; for,
" were it not for the *publick* ſtated Meetings for
" the Worſhip of God, and inſtructing of Men
" there in the true Religion, not only the *Spirit*
" of *Chriſtianity*, but the very *Face* of it, would
" be in danger to be loſt in the World.—But,
" farther—That I may yet more recommend to
" you the Uſe of *publick* Prayer, let me deſire
" you to conſider this: Is it reaſonable to wor-
" ſhip God in a Way moſt ſuitable to *our Na-*
" *ture?* If ſo, then we muſt certainly think
" ourſelves obliged to *aſſemble together* for the
" celebrating his Praiſes, and putting up our

 " Petitions

* What his Grace obſerves here, muſt be underſtood in a *qualified* Senſe, or it is not true. We *ſerve ourſelves* more by *publick*, than *private* Prayer; and we ſerve God no more by *publick* than *private* Prayer. That is, *we* are more *benefitted* by the *former*, than the *latter*; and, ſtrictly ſpeaking, God cannot be benefitted by *either*. All the Duties, that we pay *immediately* to *Him*, are appointed for the Sake of *us*, *Men*; who alone can receive any Advantage from them, God being incapable of receiving any additional Happineſs from his *Creatures*.

" Petitions for the Things we ſtand in need of.
" Man, by his own Nature, is a *ſociable* Crea-
" ture, and is ſo contrived, that, in order to the
" ſerving his Neceſſities, he muſt join in *Society*
" with others of his own Kind. And can it
" be thought reaſonable to have Society with
" one another in all other Things pertaining to
" Life, and yet to have no Society with one
" another in Matters of *Religion*, which is cer-
" tainly of higher Concernment than any *worldly*
" Affairs whatſoever? Is it neceſſary to our
" Happineſs, that we ſhould every Day com-
" municate together in our *Buſineſſes*, and in our
" *Enjoyments*, and muſt we never communicate
" together in owning the Author of our Society,
" the Head of our Community, and paying our
" Acknowledgments for the daily Benefits we
" receive from Him? For what did God Al-
" mighty give us *Speech?* Was it only for the
" tranſacting our *temporal* Concerns one with
" another? and not, at all, or not, *rather*, for
" the ſetting forth the Praiſes of our Maker,
" which is certainly the nobleſt Uſe to which it
" can be put? And, yet, that End of our Speech
" would be wholly loſt, if it were ſuppoſed that
" we were only to perform our Devotions in
" *private*; for, *private* Devotions may be per-
" formed by the *Mind*, without the uſe of the
" *Tongue*.—Add to this, that the moſt, and the
" greateſt, Bleſſings which we every Day and
" Hour enjoy, and do every Day and Hour
" ſtand in need of, are *common* Benefits, in which
" we all have a Share; ſuch as the Air we
" breathe

" breathe in, the Food we eat, the Light, our " Peace, our Liberty; above all, the Advan- " tages of the Gospel, and the Promises of eter- " nal Salvation: These are *publick* and *common* " Blessings; and, therefore, is it not infinitely " reasonable that we should all *join* in *publick* " and *common* Assemblies, to offer up our Sa- " crifice of Praise to God for these Blessings, " and to implore the Continuance of them?— " Once more, and I have done with this Head; " have we ever seriously considered the Nature of " our *Religion*, and the Duties of our common " *Christianity?* If we have, we must needs look " upon ourselves to be indispensably obliged to " frequent the *publick* Assemblies that are ap- " pointed for the *Christian* Worship. It is a " very false Opinion that some People among " us have taken up, *viz.* That *Christianity* is " no more than a Sort of *refined Philosophy*, and " that *Christians* are but a *Set* of Men that have " truer Notions about divine Matters, and ought, " therefore, to live better than the rest of the " World: It is enough, according to this Ac- " count, to intitle a Man to the Name of a " *Christian*, that he believes the Doctrines of " *Jesus Christ*, and that he lives a *moral, virtu-* " *ous* Life, tho' he exercises no Acts that ex- " press his *Relation* to that Body, or Society, " which we call the *Church*. But, certainly, " this is a great Mistake; for, when *Christ* " came to plant his Religion in the World, and, " by the means of that, to bring us to everlast- " ing Happiness, his Design was not only to

" give

" give us a *Syſtem* of *Doctrines* to be believed,
" and *Precepts* to be practiſed, *ſeparately*, by
" every Perſon, without *relation* to one another;
" but to mould and form all his Diſciples into
" *one common Body*, or *Society*; or, as we uſually
" expreſs it, into one *Church*; and, in order
" thereunto, he appointed that every one, who
" would embrace his Religon, ſhould be entered
" into that *Church*, or *Society*, by *Baptiſm*; and,
" when they are ſo entered, and made *Members*
" of *one Body*, they ſhould continue to exerciſe
" all Acts of *Memberſhip*, and *Communion* with
" that Society; and that they might be the more
" effectually obliged to this, he appointed that
" the ordinary Means, or Conduits, or Chan-
" nels, in which he would convey his Grace to
" Believers, ſhould be this exerciſe of *Commu-*
" *nion* with his Church, the joining in her *pub-*
" *lick Prayers*, and *Sacraments*; ſo that if we
" would partake of the divine Influences, which
" *Chriſt* hath purchaſed, and without which we
" cannot perform the neceſſary Terms of Sal-
" vation, there is an abſolute Neceſſity that we
" ſhould be *Members* of his *Church*: And, if
" we be Members of his Church, there is a
" Neceſſity, likewiſe, that we ſhould perform
" thoſe Acts by which that Memberſhip is ex-
" preſſed; and the chiefeſt of thoſe Acts are, to
" meet together for the Profeſſion of our Faith
" in *Chriſt*, for the worſhipping God by *Prayer*,
" and for receiving the Holy Sacrament.—Nay,
" I may add farther, that *Chriſt* has ſo ſtrictly
" combined all his Diſciples in a *Church*, or *So-*
" *ciety*,

" *ciety*, and ſo indiſpenſably *tied* all that believe
" in him to *join* in the *publick* Duties of Reli-
" gion, as *Members* of that Society, that it is
" in virtue of the *Relation* which we have to
" *that Society*, and our Willingneſs to *join* in
" thoſe Duties, that GOD accepts even our *pri-*
" *vate* Prayers; ſo that if we voluntarily cut
" ourſelves off from *Communion* with *Chriſt*'s
" *Church*, and refuſe to *join* with other *Chriſti-*
" *ans*, we have no reaſonable Grounds to expect
" that God will have any Regard to the Prayers
" that we put up in our *Cloſets*.—What I have
" ſaid, I hope, cannot fail of having ſufficient
" Force to convince reaſonable People of the
" great *Neceſſity* of attending the *publick Service*
" of the *Church*, as often as we have an Op-
" portunity; much leſs can it reaſonably be
" thought an *indifferent* Mattter, whether we
" attend it or not. No. If we have any Re-
" gard to the Honour of God; if we have any
" Regard to our own Benefit; if we have any
" Regard to the Duties which either *natural*
" *Religion*, or *Chriſtianity*, requires from us,
" we ſhall think ourſelves obliged to be very
" diligent and conſtant in attending the *publick*
" *Service* of *God*; and, if our Circumſtances
" be ſuch that, either we have not Opportunity
" of reſorting to it; or, if, having Opportuni-
" ties, our other neceſſary Buſineſs will not al-
" low us to attend it; yet, in that Caſe, theſe
" Conſiderations will oblige us to take care that
" the Worſhip of God be performed in *Fa-*
" *milies*, where *Fathers* and *Maſters* have Au-
" thority

" thority to command their *Children* and *Ser-*
" *vants* to attend. If they can no oftener than
" *one* Day in the Week be preſent at the *pub-*
" *lick* Aſſemblies, yet, they ſhould *every* Day
" in the Week *join* with the *Catholick Church*,
" in their *own Families*, in offering up the ſo-
" lemn Sacrifice of Prayer for themſelves, and
" all others.—In this Caſe every Maſter of a
" Family is allowed to be a *Prieſt*; or, he may
" depute that Office to whom he pleaſeth; but,
" if no care be taken of the Worſhip of God in
" *Families*, eſpecially, where they have not an
" Opportunity of reſorting to the *publick* Offices,
" I muſt confeſs, I think the Maſter of that
" Family has not much Senſe of Religion, and
" has a ſevere Account to make for the Truſt
" committed to him."

Thus ſpeaketh this excellent Perſon: To what has been ſaid, I ſhall only add two ſhort Obſervations, *1ſt*, That if the Point of religious Duty were quite out of the Queſtion, it would be their *Intereſt* with regard to *this* Life, to keep up a Face of *Religion* in their *Families*, as it would tend greatly to make their Children dutiful, and their Servants faithful, by preſerving a *Senſe* of *Duty* amongſt them, which is the only thing that can ſecure to them a ſettled Eſteem, and Love, and Obedience; and, wherever this is regularly done, the good Effects of it are very viſible in the Behaviour of the *whole Family*. *2dly*, That all People ought to beg a Bleſſing upon their *ſet* Meals, and afterwards to return Thanks for them: This is a Part of *Family-wor-*

ſhip,

ſhip, a proper Acknowledgement of God's Providence, that we owe the Support of our Lives to his Bounty: This is ſo natural to every religious Perſon, and ſo proper a Means of preſerving a due Senſe of our conſtant Dependance upon God, that wherever I find this Practice neglected, I muſt take it for granted that they are, either very *ignorant*, or very *irreligious* in their Notions; at leaſt, that they have not a *true* Senſe of Religion.

CHAP. VIII.

Concerning the Place *of Prayer.*

BY the *Place* of Prayer I mean, Places *appropriated* and *ſolemnly conſecrated* for *publick* Prayer; I hope I have ſufficiently proved the Duty of *private* Prayer; which may be very acceptably performed in *any* Place, neither *can* there be any *one* Place *appropriated*, much leſs *conſecrated* for ſuch Prayers, becauſe they muſt often be put to *common* Uſes; the ſame may be ſaid of *Family-prayer*; and, as to *larger* Aſſemblies of *Chriſtians meeting*, and *joining*, together in Prayer, if they have not the Opportunity of any *ſet* Place, no doubt, they may meet together in *any* Place which they can procure, occaſionally, for that purpoſe; and ſuch Prayers, when properly offered, will be accepted; or, if they can have the Conveniency of ſome *ſet* Place, which it may not be proper to *conſecrate*, (which is very often the Caſe) ſuch Places are *preferable* to

to *any other* Place, *occaſionally*, choſen for that purpoſe: But, what I mean to advance is this, that it is highly expedient, wherever they can be had, not only to *ſet apart*, or *appropriate*, particular Places for religious Worſhip, but *ſolemnly* to *conſecrate*, and *devote*, them to the Worſhip of God, in ſuch a manner that they ſhall for ever ceaſe to be *ours* to put to any *other* Uſe: This is the true Notion of *holy* Places; in this Senſe they are *God*'s Houſe; and, if they be, in a *particular* Manner, *God*'s *Houſe*, we have Reaſon to believe that he will *dwell*, or be *preſent* in thoſe Places, in a manner in which he has not promiſed to be preſent in *other* Places that are *not* ſo *peculiarly given*, or *devoted*, to his Uſe. The *Philoſopher*, full of his own vain Conceits, will ſcornfully aſk whether *Conſecration* alters the *Nature* of thoſe Buildings, as the *Papiſts* affirm of the Conſecration of the Elements of *Bread* and *Wine* at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; to which impertinent Queſtion we *Chriſtians* may ſafely anſwer, No; and, yet, affirm that Prayers offered up to God in *ſuch* Places may be more acceptable to *him*, and more profitable to *us*, than if the Places were *not* ſo ſolemnly *devoted* to that Uſe. We affirm, that nothing can be more natural and rational than this Notion. Let us put the Caſe of *Perſons*, inſtead of *Places*, and every *Chriſtian* Objector muſt be ſilent. The *Clergy* like the *Churches*, are ſet *apart* and *ſolemnly conſecrated* for the *publick Worſhip* of God, to adminiſter the *Sacraments*, and to offer up the *Prayers* of the

the Congregation; this is the *Ordinance* of *God*: Now, theſe *wiſe* Objectors may as pertinently aſk, whether the *Conſecration* of a *Prieſt* alters the *Nature* of the Man, the *Nature* of the *Elements* in the *Sacraments*, or the *Nature* of the *Prayers* which they offer up at *Church* in the Name of the People; and they may as well infer, from thence, with the *Quakers*, that the *Prayers* may be offered up, and the *Sacraments* adminiſtered, as *acceptably* to *God*, and as *effectually* to the People, by any body elſe as by a *Prieſt*: But, all this we deny upon the cleareſt Evidence; the *Prieſt* is *God's eſpecial Miniſter*, appointed, and *conſecrated* for thoſe Purpoſes; and, therefore, unleſs we give up *Chriſtianity*, and *common Senſe*, we muſt ſuppoſe that God will pay a *particular Regard* to his *own Inſtitution*. In like manner, as the *Prieſt* is *God's publick Miniſter*, the *Church is God's Houſe*, ſolemnly *devoted*, or *conſecrated*, to his Service, and *ſeparated* from all other Uſes whatſoever; from whence we may juſtly conclude, that the *Prayers* offered up by his *own Miniſter*, in his *own Houſe*, will be *particularly* acceptable, and effectual. This is the Senſe, and the only Senſe, in which the *omnipreſent* God may be ſaid to be *peculiarly* preſent in ſome Places above others, not by his *Eſſence*, (which muſt be *equally* in *all* Places) but by *ſingular Manifeſtations*, and *Communications*, of himſelf to Mankind: Now, that God has, in *this* Senſe, been, all along, *peculiarly* preſent in *particular* Places, that ſuch Places were called *his Preſence*, and became the ordinary

ordinary ſtanding Places of Worſhip, is the conſtant Doctrine of Scripture. I ſhall trace this Matter from the *Creation*, and give a brief Hiſtory of it, as we find the ſeveral Inſtances recorded in the Bible.

The great Dean of St. *Paul*'s, Dr. *Sherlock*, ſeems to have made a very probable Conjecture, *viz.* that even in *Paradiſe itſelf*, there was ſome *peculiar* Place where God moſt ordinarily appeared to our firſt Parents. For this Opinion he quotes *Gen.* iii. 8. where we read, that, when *Adam* and *Eve* had eaten the forbidden Fruit, "they "heard the Voice of the *Lord God* (the eternal "Word) walking in the Garden in the cool of "the Evening, and Adam and his Wife hid "themſelves from the *Preſence* of the Lord "God, among the Trees of the Garden." Two things, I think, are clear from this Paſſage. *Firſt*, That there was ſome *particular* Place in Paradiſe where God uſually *met*, and *converſed with* them. *Secondly*, That there was ſome *external Appearance* accompanying his *Communications* in this Place, from which they fled, and endeavoured to hide themſelves, among the *Trees* of the Garden. *Biſhop Patrick* ſuppoſes this Appearance to have been more glorious and majeſtick than it had been at *other* Times; on this Occaſion, he quotes the following Paraphraſe of a *Jewiſh Commentator*; "They heard the "Voice of the Word of the Lord, who ap-"peared in very *glorious Clouds*, in *flaming Fire*, "of ſuch an amazing Brightneſs that they were "not able to endure the Sight of it."

The next Inſtance is in the Account of *Cain* and *Abel*'s offering their *Sacrifices*, which was an Act of *religious Worſhip*, and, no doubt, accompanied with ſome *Prayers*; ſee *Gen.* iv. 3, 4. The Obſervation of Biſhop *Patrick* upon this Paſſage, is ſo pertinent to my preſent Purpoſe, that I ſhall cite it at large. "As there "were ſome ſolemn *Times* of making their de-"vout Acknowledgments to God, ſo, I doubt "not, there were ſome *ſet Places*, where they "met for that Purpoſe: For the original Word "*brought*, is never uſed about *private*, but *pub-"lick* Sacrifices; and, therefore, I ſuppoſe that "they *brought* theſe Sacrifices to ſome *fixed* "Place, looking towards the *Schechinah*, or *glo-"rious Preſence* of God at the Entrance of the "Garden of *Eden*," (as the *Jews* were afterwards ordered to look towards the *Temple* at *Jeruſalem*, when they offered up their Prayers at a Diſtance from it) "from which *Adam* had "been expelled. For there being, no doubt, "ſome *ſettled* Place, where they performed ſa-"cred Offices, it is moſt reaſonable to think "that it had reſpect to the *Schechinah*. Where-"ſoever *That* appeared, *they* appeared *before* "*God* (as the Scripture ſpeaks) becauſe *there* he "manifeſted his *ſpecial Preſence*, which moved "them to go thither to worſhip him, to give "him Thanks, or to *enquire of Him*." From this *Preſence* of the Lord, this *glorious Appearance*, which *Cain*, at the 14th Verſe, calls the *Face of the Lord*, he was baniſhed, and never afterwards enjoyed the Sight of it; and God with-

drawing his *gracious Preſence* from him, he was alſo forſaken by him, and put out of his ſpecial Protection. From thence he went into the Land of *Nod*, which was as much the Place of God's *eſſential* Preſence, as that from which he was baniſhed.

Let us now proceed to the Hiſtory of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; from whence we not only learn, that in thoſe Days they always had their *appropriate* Places of Worſhip, but that they pitched their Tents, and built their Altars, either in ſuch Places as God directed them to, or where God appeared to them, and that theſe were the Places where God ordinarily received their Homage, and converſed with them. At the 12th ch. ver. 6, 7, we read that God appeared unto *Abraham* in the Place of *Sichem*, in the Plain of *Mamre*, and that there he built an Altar unto the Lord, who appeared to him. If we proceed in the Hiſtory to the 13th ch. v. 4, we ſhall find that he returned hither again when he came out of *Egypt*; and that there, at the Place of the ſame Altar which he built at the firſt, he called on the Name of the Lord: So that the *Appearance* of God to him in this Place, had made it a *ſtanding* Place of Worſhip. In this Place God appeared to him again, and renewed his Promiſe to him after the Departure of *Lot*. After this, by God's Command, *Abraham* removed his Tent, and dwelt in the Plain of *Mamre*, where he built an Altar to the Lord, xiii. 18. Here God frequently appeared to him, as we may ſee at large in the xvth, xviith, and

xviiith

xviiith Chapters. In the ſame manner, when God appeared to *Iſaac* at *Beerſheba*, he built an Altar, and called upon the Name of the Lord, and took up his Abode there, as in a Place where God was *preſent*, xxvi. 24, 25. "And "the Lord appeared to him the ſame Night, "and ſaid, I am the God of *Abraham* thy Fa- "ther, *&c.* And he builded an Altar there, "and called upon the Name of the Lord."— Thus, as *Jacob*, his Son, was going towards *Haran*, being obliged to lodge in the Field all Night, he had a *Dream*, wherein he ſaw a Ladder ſet upon the Earth, the Top of which reached to Heaven; and he ſaw *Angels* aſcending and deſcending upon it, God himſelf ſtanding above it, and renewing his Promiſe and Covenant to him. From hence he concluded that God was *peculiarly preſent* in this Place. Says he, Chap. xxviii. 12, 13, *&c.* "How dreadful is this Place, "this is none other than the Gate of Heaven;" and, therefore, he calls the Name of it *Bethel*, and ſets up the Stone whereon he lay, and pours Oil on it, and vows that if he came again in Peace to his Father's Houſe, that Stone which he had ſet up ſhould be *God's Houſe*. This is *God's Houſe*; this is the *Gate of Heaven*. Here God might be ſaid to *keep his Court*, attended by his *holy Angels*, his *Miniſters*, whom *Jacob* had ſeen going up from hence to receive Inſtructions, and coming down from thence to put them in Execution. Thus the great Mr. *Mead* explains it Book 2. p. 436. He obſerves, that the *Preſence* of *God* in one Place more than another,

conſiſts in his *Train* or *Retinue*; a *King* is there where his *Court* is; and ſo God is there *ſpecially preſent*, where the Angels keep their Station. This is the Meaning of that Expreſſion, the *Gate of Heaven*, i. e. *Heaven's Court*; for the *Gate* was wont to be the *Judgment-Hall*, and the Place where *Kings*, attended by their Guards and Miniſters, uſed to ſit to hear Cauſes, and to grant Petitions. At the 3d ch. of *Exod.* v. 2, *&c.* there is another Inſtance of God's more *immediate Preſence*, when the Angel of God appeared and ſpake to *Moſes* out of the midſt of the *Burning Buſh*. "And *Moſes* ſaid, I will "now turn aſide, and ſee this great Sight, why "the Buſh is not burnt. And when the Lord "ſaw that he turned aſide to ſee, God called "unto him out of the midſt of the Buſh, and "ſaid, Moſes, Moſes; and he ſaid, Here am I. "And he ſaid, Draw not nigh hither, put off "thy Shoes from off thy Feet, for the Place "whereon thou ſtandeſt is *holy Ground*." The *Angel of the Lord appeared*; that is, the *Schechinah*, which had appeared ſo often to the *Patriarchs*. *Put off thy Shoes*; which was in thoſe Eaſtern Countries an Act of external Reſpect, as *pulling off the Hat* is amongſt us. The Reaſon aſſigned for God's commanding him to pay this Mark of Reverence was, becauſe the *Ground was holy*. It was made holy by the *eſpecial Preſence* of God, who is moſt holy, and makes every thing relating to him to be holy too.

From this Account we may obſerve, in anſwer to *Barklay*, the great Apoſtle of the *Quakers*,

kers, that a *Diſtinction* and *Conſecration* of *Places* in religious Worſhip, is not a piece of *Jewiſh Superſtition*, but *prior* to the *ceremonial* Law of *Moſes*, and *coæval* with *Adam*; and that it is no Superſtition at all to pay *external Reverence* to Places more immediately related to *God*. Parallel to this Inſtance of *Moſes*, we meet with another in *Joſhua*, Chap. v. Ver. 13, *&c.* when God appeared to him by *Jericho*; *Looſe thy Shoe from off thy Foot, for the Place whereon thou ſtandeſt is holy Ground.* And this is a true Account of the Holineſs of the *Jewiſh Tabernacle* and *Temple*. There were, indeed, great Myſteries concealed under *Types* and *Ceremonies*, but it was the ſpecial Preſence of God, and not the Types and Ceremonies, that made the Holineſs of the Place. I know no Writer that has treated this Subject ſo well as Dean *Sherlock* in his Sermon on *Religious Aſſemblies*; and from thence I ſhall give the Reader a ſuccinct Account of the Matter.—When *Moſes* had ſet up the Tabernacle, a Cloud covered the Tent of the Congregation, and the Glory of the Lord filled the *Tabernacle*, Exod. xl. 34. Thus at the Dedication of *Solomon*'s Temple, when the Prieſts were come out of the holy Place, the Cloud filled this Houſe of the Lord, ſo that the Prieſts could not ſtand to miniſter becauſe of the Cloud; for the Glory of the Lord had filled the Houſe of the Lord †, 1 Kings viii. 10, *&c.* This was a viſible Sign

 that

† When the ſecond Temple was rebuilt, it was *ſolemnly dedicated*, though there were not the ſame viſible Tokens of God's Acceptance of it for his Houſe.

that God had taken Poſſeſſion of this Houſe, and would dwell there, as *Solomon* expounds it, ver. 12. *Then ſpake Solomon, The Lord ſaid that he would dwell in the thick Darkneſs: I have ſurely built thee a Houſe to dwell in, a ſettled Place for thee to abide in for ever.* For this Reaſon it is called the *Houſe of God*, his *Habitation*, his *Dwelling-place*, his *Gate*, his *Courts*, and (which is the true Interpretation of all this) his *Preſence*. *Let us come before his Preſence with Thankſgiving*, Pſal. xcv. 21. to his *Houſe* and *Temple*, where God is *preſent*; which is therefore called *appearing before the Lord*, as all the Tribes of *Iſrael* were commanded to do three times every Year, at three ſolemn Feſtivals; and this appearing before the Lord, was their coming up to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip at the Temple.

What I have ſaid, I hope, ſufficiently proves that before and under the Law, God, who is *eſſentially* preſent in *all* Places, was yet ſo *peculiarly preſent* in ſome Places, as he was not in others.

But for the better underſtanding That, we muſt enquire what this *ſpecial* and *peculiar* Preſence of God is? For this ſeems a great Difficulty to ſome Men, that God ſhould not be *equally* preſent in *all* Places; but the Account of this is plain and ſhort; that tho' God is preſent *every where*, he is not *equally* preſent in all Places to *all Purpoſes*; which is the only poſſible Diſtinction that can be made concerning the *Preſence* of an *omnipreſent* Being. God is preſent in Heaven, in Earth, and in Hell; but he *manifeſts*

feſts himſelf very differently in each, and theſe different Manifeſtations are a different Kind of Preſence.

As, to keep to my preſent Subject, God is preſent in all the Earth, as the ſupreme Lord, Governor, and Preſerver of all Things; but, in ſome Places, he was peculiarly preſent to reveal his Will to Men, and to receive their Homage and Adorations; and this is that which is peculiarly called the *Preſence* of God in Scripture.

But, is not God preſent in all Places to hear the Prayers of good Men who call upon him? Yes, moſt certainly; and ſo he was both *before* and *under* the Law; and, yet, we ſee that he *ſanctified* ſome Places with his more peculiar Preſence for the publick and ſolemn Acts of Worſhip. Thus, a Prince may receive a private Petition from a private Hand, *wherever* he is preſent, but yet may think it very fitting to appoint a *Preſence* of State to receive the publick Homage and Addreſſes of his Subjects.—Thus, in fact, it was in the *Jewiſh* Temples; and it was as reaſonable as the publick Solemnities of Worſhip are, without which Religion itſelf would be baniſhed the World: For, did Men but believe that they could worſhip God as well at *Home* as at *Church*, that God is no more preſent in religious Aſſemblies, than in their private Cloſets, there were an End of publick Worſhip, and of Religion too. This is too viſible in thoſe who have entertained this Opinion. But when God, who has his Throne in Heaven, has his Footſtool and Preſence on

Earth, where he commands us to pay our Homage; this preſerves the Senſe of God, and of Religion, alive in the World, and gives a juſt Awe and Reverence for God when we approach his Preſence.

This is a very ſenſible Reaſon for *appropriated* Places of Worſhip, where God vouchſafes his more peculiar Preſence. If this were not originally a divine Inſtitution, as the Inſtances already given fairly intimate that it was, then mere natural Reaſon taught it all Mankind; for there never was any Nation, which worſhipped any God, but they erected Temples for their Worſhip. And it is as evident, that all Nations did believe, that the Gods whom they worſhipped, were *peculiarly preſent* in their Temples. The *Pagans* did not believe their Gods to be omnipreſent, and therefore endeavoured, by magical Spells and Charms, to ſhut them up in their Images and Temples, that they might know where to find them. And in THIS Notion the antient *Chriſtians* abominated the Thoughts of Temples and Images, ſince *they* worſhipped a God who fills *Heaven* and *Earth* with *his* Preſence. This indeed was a Corruption of natural Religion, as Polytheiſm and Idolatry were; but it ſhews how neceſſary they thought a divine Preſence to a Place of Worſhip. The *Jews* underſtood better, that God could not be confined to any Place; *that the Heaven of Heavens could not contain him*, as *Solomon* owns in his Prayer of Dedication; but yet begs, that God would be graciouſly pleaſed

to

to be present to *hear* and *answer* the Petitions which should be offered up there; which is all the peculiar Presence that he prays for as necessary to make a House of Prayer; the Name which God himself gives to the *Jewish* Temple, *My House shall be called a House of Prayer.*

Now, if this be the Notion of God's House, that it is a *House of Prayer*, a House where God is peculiarly present to hear our Prayers, we must own that every *Christian Church* is as much the *House of God*, as the Temple at *Jerusalem* was; unless we will deny that God is as present in *Christian* Assemblies, and in Places dedicated to *Christian* Worship, as he was in the *Jewish* Temple; which would be to make *Christianity* a more imperfect Dispensation than *Judaism*; for *that* is certainly the most perfect State of the Church, where God is most peculiarly present. There is indeed a great Difference between the *Jewish* Temples and *Christian* Churches; but, as to the *Presence* of *God*, which *only* makes a Temple, the Advantage is greatly on the *Christian* Side. The Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle, and Temple, contained many Figures of *Christ*; but those *Types* were not the *Presence* of God, nor the Object of their religious Worship, which had been Idolatry against the Second Commandment: But for the sake of these Types, God chose that Place for his peculiar Presence.—Now, instead of *these Types*, we have the *Antetype* himself, the Son of God made Flesh, who, tho' ascended into Heaven, has promised his peculiar Presence in all

all the Assemblies of *Christians*; which is such a Presence of God as never filled the *Jewish* Temple till *Christ* appeared; for which Reason God tells them, that the second Temple, tho' it fell vastly short of the external Beauty and Magnificence of the first, yet should excel in Glory, by the personal Appearance of *Christ* in it. So that *Christ* having promised, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his Name, he will be in the midst of them, every *Christian* Church has a divine Presence greater than the Temple: For, tho' we should grant that this Promise extends to all the *occasional* Meetings of *Christians*, wherever the Place be, yet it much more extends to all the *solemn* and *publick Places* and Acts of Worship. Thus there was but one Temple in the whole Land of *Canaan*. God, for mystical Reasons, confin'd his more peculiar Presence to that House where he had placed the Figures and Types of *Christ*, thro' whom only we have Access to God. But now this blessed *Jesus*, who is greater than the Temple, is in all *Christian* Assemblies, and makes every *Christian* Church greater than the Temple. In this Sense our Saviour told the Woman of *Samaria*, "Wo-"man, believe me, the Hour is coming, when "ye shall neither on this Mountain, nor yet at "*Jerusalem*, worship the Father," *John* iv. 21. Which does not signify, that hereafter there should be no *peculiar* and *appropriate* Places of Worship, but that the *Presence* and Worship of God should no longer be confined to any *one Place*, neither to the Temple of *Jerusalem*, nor *Samaria*;

Samaria; but it ſhould be free all over the World to erect Houſes of Prayer and Worſhip, where God would be preſent with them, as in the *Temple* of *Jeruſalem*; for there ſhould an End be put to that typical State, and typical Worſhip, which was confined to the Temple, and the true Worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth. And this ſpiritual Worſhip is confined to no one Place, but will find God preſent all the World over; which is ſo far from abrogating all peculiar Places of Worſhip, ſuch as the Temple at *Jeruſalem* and *Samaria* were, that it makes every Church, whatſoever Part of the World it be in, in a truer Senſe, the Houſe of God, than ever the Temple at *Jeruſalem* was. Indeed, a *formal Conſecration* of Places appointed for *publick Worſhip* could not be practiſed in the firſt Ages of *Chriſtianity*, while the Church was under Perſecution, becauſe, after their having been thus ſolemnly given to God for his Uſe, and his *only*, the *Chriſtians* might have been diſpoſſeſs'd of them, and they might have been applied, by the *Heathens*, to *ſecular*, or *idolatrous* Uſes; but, as ſoon as *Chriſtianity* was embraced and protected by the *civil* Powers, the antient Practice of *conſecrating* Churches, *i. e.* Places *appropriated* to publick Worſhip, was revived, and has been ever ſince continued in the Chriſtian Church, till ſome *modern* Proteſtants thought fit to be wiſer than all *Antiquity*, and to cenſure all ſuch *outward* Ceremonies as *Superſtition*. One would think that common Modeſty and Humility

Humility ſhould teach them to pay a Regard to a Practice which has the Sanction of the *Patriarchs*, and of *God himſelf*, by his Servant *Moſes*; and to imagine, that ſuch an univerſal Practice by thoſe who were *divinely inſpired*, and of all *pious Chriſtians* in the *primitive* Times, muſt be grounded upon wiſe Reaſons, and calculated to promote Piety, by helping to create an *inward* Reverence for ſuch Places, and to excite Devotion in the Mind. One general Obſervation I cannot help making upon theſe *purely ſpiritual* Worſhippers; they ſeem to be utterly ignorant of *human Nature*, not at all conſidering that while the *Mind* is united to the *Body*, and ſubject to be influenced by it, the *Senſes* will have their Share in attracting our Attention, and creating, or improving, religious Diſpoſitions. Upon this is founded the Cuſtom of all our Solemnities at the Appointment of *civil* Magiſtrates, the Regalia and magnificent Habits made uſe of in the Execution of their Office; and if all theſe *outward* Formalities were to be laid aſide, and Magiſtrates were always to appear, in the Eyes of the Multitude, as *common* Men, they would ſoon loſe their Authority and Influence. The Application of this Remark to *Religion* is very obvious, *Human Nature* being the ſame at *Church*, as in a *Court* of *Juſtice*, and liable to the ſame Influence from external Appearances and Ceremonies. We, of the *Church* of *England*, have the Happineſs of worſhipping God in Places *conſecrated*, as the *Tabernacle* and the *Temple* were, by *ſolemn Prayers*

ers offered up to God, by the Bishops and Pastors of *Christ's* Church; these are his Houses where he delights to dwell, where he expects us to pay our publick Homage; where he will be best pleased with our Addresses, and the most ready to receive and answer them; hither, therefore, we should be ready and glad to repair as often as possible. If we had the Piety of *David*, we should have his ardent Desires to appear before God in his House of Prayer; and our constant Attendance, and devout and reverent Behaviour there, would be the Means of *increasing* our Piety, as it did his. I shall now inquire how *often* Men ought to pray.

CHAP. IX.

Concerning the Times, *or* Frequency *of* Prayer.

ONE would hardly think it possible for any *rational* Creature to entertain so *irrational* an Opinion, but in the fourth Century there did arise a Set of Men who thought themselves obliged to be *always* praying, as if a *Christian* had nothing else to do in this World: This monstrous Error was grounded upon some Passages of Scripture misunderstood. We are commanded to *pray always*; to pray without *ceasing*; which they understood *so literally*, as to think that they ought to spend their *whole* Time in the Exercise of this Duty; not considering what a Number of *other* Duties every Man is

commanded in Scripture to do: So that if we are commanded to ſpend our *whole* Time in the Performance of *one* Duty, what Time will there be left for the *other* Duties that are equally enjoined us? or, how can the Scriptures be reconciled to themſelves? A *literal* Interpretation, therefore, of the above-mentioned Paſſages, relating to the Duty of Prayer, is ſo abſurd, that I ſhould not have thought it worth mentioning, if there were not, even at *this* Time, many *Enthuſiaſts*, called *Methodiſts*, who ſuffer their *Piety* to eat up their *Morality*, to the Neglect of the common Duties and Offices of the Station in which God has placed them, and the Ruin of themſelves and Families. Theſe ignorant People, inſtead of being encouraged by their Teachers to be perpetually running after them, ſhould be taught to mind the Buſineſs of their *Calling*, in order to anſwer the proper Ends of Life; and that one great End of *Prayer* is, to enable them to do it with Diligence and Fidelity, and to behave properly as *ſocial* Creatures. Beſides, if we *had* nothing elſe to do but to *pray*, we could not be *always praying*, to any manner of Purpoſe. Our preſent State will not admit of ſuch an uninterrupted Courſe of Devotion, whatever we may be capable of in the *next* Life. It is impoſſible for our *Attention* and *Affection* to be thus conſtantly kept up, though the *Lips* might be *inceſſantly* employed; and, unleſs we pray with *Attention*, and ſome tolerable Degree of *Affection*, we might as well be doing nothing. But we may be ſaid, in a very proper Senſe, to

pray always, and *without ceasing*, if we be daily constant in the Observance of *set* Hours of Prayer, both in *publick* and in *private*.

First, Let us consider *Frequency* as it respects *publick* Prayer. This will *vary* with the *various Circumstances* of Men in the *different Stations* of Life; which will afford fewer, or more frequent, Opportunities of attending the Service of the Church. There is one Rule, indeed, that will reach *all* Mankind, unless hindered by *Sickness*, Works of *Mercy*, and *absolute Necessity*: These Cases excepted, every one is obliged to attend *publick Worship twice* on a Sunday. I shall say the less upon this Head *here*, because I have fully considered it in Two Sermons lately published upon *the Observation of the Sunday*, which will be annexed to this Discourse, as having an immediate Connection with it. I shall only take notice of one Thing, which I am most sincerely and heartily concerned that there is so much Occasion to mention. I have already given a Hint of it, and would be glad to drop a Subject that may possibly give Offence to some whose Stations I greatly honour. I defy any Man living to have a more respectful Regard for his *Superiors* than I sincerely have, to be more pleased with any proper Opportunity of shewing it, or to be more unwilling to disoblige them: But as I have presumed to take upon me the Business of a *publick Instructor*, upon Subjects of the last Importance to the Salvation of Mankind, the Support of Government, the Peace and Happiness of the Society whereof

I am a Member, it is incumbent upon me to discharge my Office with Fidelity, tho' I should be glad to do it with the utmost Tenderness. Persons in High-life, and of affluent Fortunes, being independent, have not the least Pretence for neglecting to attend the publick Service of the Church, and yet many of them scarce ever appear there, unless necessitated by the Duty of some Civil Office, or occasionally drawn by some Motives of Interest, or Decency; by which means they not only neglect their own Duty, but hinder their Servants from performing theirs; and by the Influence of their Examples, occasion others in the Neighbourhood to stay away. When they see Persons whom they naturally suppose to have more improved Understandings, shew such an utter Contempt for publick Worship, it must lessen their Opinion of its Obligation and Importance, and beget such an *Indifferency*, at least, as will give every the slightest Excuse for not attending it the greater Weight. But there are still many more who would be thought to have a very serious Sense of Religion, while they content themselves with attending the Service *one* Part of the Day only, without any better Excuse than not being willing to rise early enough to prepare themselves for Church; or for the Pleasure of indulging, after Dinner, in Conversation with their Friends. If what I have said upon the Advantages attending the due Performance of the Duty of *publick Prayer* at *Church*, can have any Weight, I think it must put all such idle Excuses out of Coun-

Countenance; if it has had *no* Effect, I am ſure it is not in *my* Power to ſay any thing that will, and therefore I can only beg of God to give them a better Senſe of their Duty. But, while I am complaining of the great Decay of *Piety* among People of *Faſhion*, Juſtice requires me to acknowledge that there are, to *my Knowledge*, (and I hope there are many more in other Parts of the Kingdom) Gentlemen of very large Fortunes, who conſtantly attend the Church with all their Servants that can poſſibly be ſpared, both *Morning* and *Afternoon*. One in particular, whom I have formerly had the Pleaſure of knowing, has ſo ſtrict a Senſe of his Duty that if a *Nobleman* of the firſt Quality dined with him upon a *Sunday* he never excuſed himſelf to his *Maker* for not attending him at his Houſe of Prayer, but always excuſed himſelf to his *Friends* for not bearing them company in the Time of Divine Service, leaving only a Servant to attend them in his Abſence: And he was ſo happy in the *Uniformity* of his Conduct, that they did not think him either *rude*, or *ſuperſtitious*.

2. There are other *ſet* Times for *publick* Prayer beſides what are appointed on *Sundays*. Theſe, indeed, are not like the former, of *univerſal Obligation*, but to be obſerved wherever People have a convenient Opportunity; I mean, the publick Service of the Church on *Week-Days*. Many Perſons conſtantly attend it both Parts of the Day on *Sundays*, becauſe they conſider that *Day* as a Day ſet apart for *religious* Uſes, but the reſt of the Week they apprehend

to be *theirs*, to be employed in what Manner they ſhall think fit, provided they do not ſpend it in any unlawful Buſineſs, or Diverſion. Of this ſtrange Opinion I meet with not only ignorant and illiterate Perſons, but with very ſenſible and ſerious People. But, where do they learn this Divinity? Not from the *Nature* and *Effects* of publick Prayer, for thoſe are the very ſame at *all* Times: Not from the Practice of the *Jews*, for they aſſembled together for the Worſhip of God at other Times beſides the *Sabbath*: Not from the *primitive Chriſtians*; not from the Conſtitution of our own Church, which has appointed a *daily* Service, and requires the *Clergy* to *read* daily Prayers at Church, where they can get a Congregation, and are not otherwiſe *occaſionally* hindered. Now, if *publick Authority* has provided a *daily* Service, and the *Clergy* be commanded, as often as they conveniently can, to *read* it, ſurely it muſt be the Duty of the *Laity*, as often as they conveniently can, to attend it. Men are not to neglect the Duties of their Station, but every Station of Life will afford more frequent Opportunities than moſt People make uſe of. In *London* and *Weſtminſter*, there are Prayers in ſome Church or another, at almoſt every Hour of the Day, by which means *Buſineſs* and Piety, *Pleaſure* and Piety, might often be reconciled, where there is an Inclination to do it. But, now, go into any of the Churches, and you ſeldom ſee any *young* Perſons, much ſeldomer any Perſons of *Faſhion*, but only a few *old* and *poor* People; as if *Youth*

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and *Devotion*, like *Love* and *Old Age*, were inconſiſtent; as if *Riches* and *Grandeur* made it *below* them to worſhip their *Creator*. The *royal* Prophet was a Perſon of a moſt excellent Underſtanding, and polite Taſte, (as appears by his Compoſitions) and yet he did not think *Devotion* an *abſurd* and *unpolite* Thing, but took the higheſt Delight in *publick Worſhip*. He was the *greateſt Prince* that ever reigned *before*, or *ſince*, his Son *Solomon*, and yet he thought it his *higheſt Honour* to be admitted into the more immediate Preſence of his *Maker*. He had great Variety of *Buſineſs* to tranſact in the Government of a large and populous Kingdom, and yet he found *Leiſure*, becauſe he always had an *Inclination*, to attend the Service of the *Temple*.

From the *Metropolis* let us travel into the *Country*, and take a melancholy View of the State of *Piety* in the *larger Villages* and *Market-Towns*. In moſt of them there are Prayers on *Wedneſdays*, *Fridays*, and *Holidays*, but *few*, of either Sort, have *daily* Prayers. It does not become *me* to preſcribe to my *reverend Brethren*, many of whom are my Superiors in *Age*, in *Character*, and in *Station*; but I may decently, and I hope as inoffenſively, declare what I apprehend to be *my* Duty. When God Almighty thought fit to remove me from *London* into this Place I found a very populous Pariſh, Prayers only *Wedneſdays*, *Fridays*, and *Holidays*, and thoſe very badly attended. Upon this I drew up a Courſe of Sermons upon the Subject, and immediately after introduced *daily* Prayers, which

I make it a Rule conſtantly to attend, whether I read or not; ſometimes when it is not a little inconvenient to me. The *Morning* is the only Time of riding for *Pleaſure*, but I never ride for Pleaſure *only*, unleſs I can do it before or after Prayers are over, being very deſirous, by my *Example*, as well as by *Precept*, to encourage my Pariſhioners to attend them. But ſometimes it is ſtill *more* inconvenient. The *Morning* is the Time for *writing*, as well as for *riding*, and the Mind is not always equally diſpoſed for it. The Bell, perhaps, calls me to Church when I am in the midſt of an Argument, and in a better Diſpoſition, than uſual, for writing; if I leave off, the Chain of my Thoughts may be broke, and it may not be in my Power afterwards to reaſſume it to the ſame Advantage. What is to be done in this Caſe? Shall I neglect the *Prayers*, or my *Compoſition?* Very worthy pious Men of my Acquaintance, are of another Opinion; but I think it of more conſequence to ſet my Pariſhioners an Example than to read the moſt learned and uſeful Book that ever was wrote, or to write the fineſt Things that ever were conceived. Unleſs I am diſtreſs'd in *Time*, and the Thing demands *immediate Execution*, I take my Chance for another favourable Diſpoſition. I cenſure nobody for thinking differently from me, and I hope nobody will cenſure *me* for ſo freely declaring my *own* Sentiments, and the *Reaſons* upon which they are grounded. If I were a *Clergyman* in a more eminent Situation, of a more important Character,

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or of more Leiſure, I ſhould think myſelf ſtill more obliged to be cautious how I gave the World the leaſt Reaſon to ſuſpect my Zeal for *publick Worſhip*; and the World, in excuſe for their own Neglect, are but too forward to take Encouragement from our *Non-attendance*, even where there are the moſt juſtifiable Reaſons for it. Nothing could hurt Religion more than a Notion among the *Laity* that the *Clergy* do not care to go to Church, unleſs they are obliged to do Duty; and they are ever watchful to make Obſervations of this Nature. But enough, and, I fear, too much, on this tender Point. It is time to attend to the Behaviour of the *Laity*. As to my *Pariſhioners*, I muſt, in Juſtice, acknowledge that I have daily four, ſometimes five or ſix times as many at Prayers as I found when I firſt came, tho' there were then Prayers only twice a Week; and yet the Congregation is far ſhort of the Number that might contrive their Buſineſs ſo as to ſpare half an Hour in a Morning, for their Attendance upon God in his Houſe, without any Prejudice to their worldly Affairs; and would do it too, if they had as right Notions of *ſpiritual*, as they have of *temporal* Advantages. Nay, I daily ſee People loitering about the Town while the Bell calls them to Church, quite at a loſs to know how to *waſte* that Time; or, perhaps, they are as idly employed at Home. Good God! If there be any Senſe in Religion, ſurely there cannot be common Senſe in ſuch Conduct. Mankind are ſo impatient of Attention to any Thing but their Buſineſs and their

Pleaſures, that it is hardly poſſible to make them think long enough, and cloſe enough, upon *religious* Subjects to receive any laſting Impreſſions. But I'll try to put this Caſe in ſo ſtrong a Light, that it ſhall ſtrike any one that is not a downright *Ideot*, or *Madman*. Suppoſe there were a very great Man in the Neighbourhood, of ſuch uncommon Perfections that he was the Admiration, of ſuch diffuſive Goodneſs that he was the Delight of all his Neighbours, of ſuch extenſive Power and Influence that he was capable of *making* them all happy; that they were indebted to him daily for all the Health and Succeſs, for all the Neceſſaries and Comforts that they enjoyed, or expected; but that, notwithſtanding his incomparable Excellencies, his Greatneſs in *Himſelf*, his Goodneſs to *them*, his Power to blaſt, or proſper, all their Schemes of Happineſs, they were daily provoking his Reſentment by contradicting his Will, and doing Things greatly diſagreeable to him. Suppoſe, farther, that there was a *ſet Time*, every Day, when as many of the Neighbours as could poſſibly ſpare Time from their neceſſary Employments, ſhould wait on him, by his own Invitation and Command, with their united Acknowledgments of their Diſobedience, with their united Acknowledgments of his Excellencies, with their united Thankſgivings for the many undeſerved Favours which he daily beſtowed upon them, with their united Petitions for the Continuance of his Favours; would not Generoſity, would not Gratitude, would not Self-intereſt,

intereſt, would not Self-preſervation, would not all theſe ſtrong Motives *conſpire* to induce, and could ſo many ſtrong Motives fail of perſuading to an aſſiduous Endeavour to attend, and to attend with Pleaſure, as often as poſſible? Much leſs would they add Impudence to their Neglect, by idly ſauntring up and down before his Door, while others are going into the Houſe. Reader! are you quite blind, or are you determined to keep your Eyes cloſe ſhut againſt the Light of Conviction? If not, open them and ſee (and if you open them ever ſo little you muſt ſee) that this, tho' ſtrong and affecting, is not a *full* Repreſentation of the Caſe between *God* and his *Creatures*; neither can any Caſe be put that will be parallel. This however may ſerve to convince, and if not to *convince*, yet, at leaſt, to *ſilence* the *irreligious Abſenters*; tho' I ſhould be much better pleaſed if I could *perſuade* them to a more conſtant Attendance. What I have now ſaid concerns thoſe particularly who live in *Market-Towns* and *large Villages*, where, by reaſon of their Nearneſs to the Church, they may have Opportunities which ſuch as live at a greater Diſtance from it, cannot ſo conveniently take, unleſs they be *Gentlemen* of *Fortune*, who are more at Leiſure, and can *convey* themſelves without any Trouble. I ſhould think that *they* might, *ſometimes*, ſpare an Hour from their Country Amuſements to attend upon God who has bleſs'd them with ſuch ſuperior Advantages. To *all ſorts* of People, from the *higheſt* to the *loweſt*, I muſt obſerve, that if the

Times of *publick* Prayer happen to be inconſiſtent with their other Affairs, this is an additional Reaſon to enforce the Practice of *Family* Prayer, which they may more eaſily accommodate to their *Conveniency*. And having Occaſion to mention this Subject again, I ſhall tranſcribe a Paſſage from a moſt admirable and agreeable Writer, Dr. *Hildrop*, his *Huſbandman's Spiritual Companion*, lately publiſhed by *John* and *James Rivington*, in St. *Paul's Church-yard*, pag. 62. " Every *Chriſtian* Family ſhould be conſidered " as ſo many Servants of God united under one " Head, who have all ſome common Bleſſings " to aſk, ſome common Dangers to fear, ſome " common Mercies to give Thanks for; (I add, " ſome common Sins to acknowledge) there- " fore, the Governor of it ſhould call together " as many as can be at Leiſure, twice a Day, in " the Morning and the Evening; and by him- " ſelf, or ſome one of the Family, offer up " their Prayers for what they want, and their " Thankſgivings for what they enjoy. (I add " again, their Confeſſion of their common Sins) " But, alas! I have Reaſon to fear, that in too " many Families it is never practiſed at all, to " the eternal Scandal and Reproach of thoſe " who neglect it; for Prayer is not only a prin- " cipal Part of divine Service, but a neceſſary " one too, as it both engages and enables us " to perform the other Parts of it; and where " this is omitted, it is ſcarce to be expected that " the reſt ſhould be performed. And now how " dreadful a Sight is it to any ſerious, conſide-

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" rate *Chriſtian*, to ſee a Family ſeparate in an
" Evening without the leaſt Appearance of *Chri-*
" *ſtian* Devotion, and meet again next Morn-
" ing, like the other Animals in the Family,
" only to be fed, without any Thought of Gra-
" titude to Almighty God for his paſt Mercies,
" or any Petition for his merciful Protection for
" the future? In ſhort, it is a deplorable Obſer-
" vation, that *Family Devotion*, and *ſaying*
" *Grace before and after Meat*, are growing
" ſtrangely out of Faſhion among thoſe who
" are called *great Folks*, and *the better Sort of*
" *People*. Strange Infatuation! monſtrous In-
" gratitude! that they who, by the peculiar In-
" dulgence of Heaven, enjoy the greateſt Share
" of worldly Proſperity, ſhould forget the Hand
" that beſtows it, refuſe the poor Returns of a
" thankful Heart, and neglect to beg his Bleſ-
" ſing upon it. Theſe are ſad Indications of
" a latent Infidelity, which is ſpreading far
" and wide in this ſinful Generation." The *Nobility* and *prime Gentry* may make *Family-Devotion* ſtill more ſolemn and effectual, by keeping a regular, worthy Clergyman in their Houſe; not as Part of their *Retinue*, to be treated as a *Servant*, but as the *conſecrated Miniſter* of their *common Creator*, to offer up the Addreſſes of the Family to him, and to bleſs them in his Name. A *good* Clergyman, kept upon a true Principle of *Piety*, like the Ark of God, might be a Comfort to the whole Family, and make every thing proſper: *Infidels* may divert themſelves with this, as they do with every *other*

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Part of *Religion*, but none *but* an Infidel, or a *very unthinking* Believer can do it. I am willing, and glad, to do Juſtice to every Body, and I freely own that, as far as I can inform myſelf, the *Diſſenters* in general, are more regular in the Performance of *Family-Duty* than the Members of the *Church of England*: If this be a Reproach to us, let us wipe it off by following their Example in every thing that is praiſe-worthy. But, there is one Inſtance of Piety in which I muſt think them very blameable; in this, and in other *Market-Towns*, and *large Villages*, they have the Opportunity of *publick Worſhip* with *us* when they have none in their *own* Way, and yet never attend it; I ſay, in this Neglect they are wanting both in *Piety*, and *Charity*. *Formerly* the *Separation* was founded upon different Principles from what it is *now*; the *Terms of Communion* were, *then*, thought to be *ſinful*, and all ſuch as were in *that* Perſuaſion were obliged in Conſcience to refuſe ever to communicate with us in the Uſe of our Service; but the Caſe is quite altered. They *ſeparate* from us becauſe they think their *own* Way of Worſhip more *edifying* than ours; but I know no Diſſenter that refuſes, *occaſionally*, to join with us in the Uſe of our *eſtabliſhed Worſhip*. Now, if it be *lawful* (as they allow it to be by their Practice) to join with us at *one* Time, it is equally lawful to do it at *any* Time; and if it be *lawful*, it muſt be their *Duty* to do it, whenever they have a convenient Opportunity, provided they have not, at the ſame time, an Opportunity of worſhipping God in a Way that they think *preferable*.

ble. Why they never meet together for *publick Worſhip* unleſs there be a *Sermon*, when *Prayer* muſt be allowed to be the *principal* Thing, I leave *them* to think of at their leiſure, it being no Part of my preſent Subject. I argue, from the *Nature* and *Advantages* of *publick* Prayer, that all *pious Chriſtians* ſhould attend it as often as they can; and, conſequently, that when they have not an Opportunity of doing it at their own Places of Worſhip they ought to do it at *Church*, rather than not do it at all: But, Reaſons of *Charity*, as well as of *Piety*, require this of them. *Brotherly Love* is a *Chriſtian* Duty; and brotherly Love is never ſo effectually ſhewn as by communicating with us in *publick Chriſtian* Offices, inſomuch that refuſing to communicate with us when they can do it *lawfully*, is denying us to be true Members of *Chriſt's Catholick Church*, and betrays a very *uncharitable* Diſpoſition. I ſpeak freely, but with great Temper, and in the Spirit of Meekneſs. If they do me Juſtice, all the *Diſſenters*, wherever I have liv'd, muſt own that I always behaved to them with Reſpect and Friendlineſs; but I muſt not compliment them at the expence of *Truth*, and *Piety:* Indeed, it would be *no* Compliment to them, becauſe it would be encouraging them to go on in what I *muſt* think, and ever have thought, an *unchriſtian* Practice. I have argued this Matter very candidly with ſome of the moſt ſenſible of their Teachers; and, indeed, very learned and ſenſible Men I found them to be. What they urged I will fairly tell you, and if it gives my *Readers* any

any Satisfaction, it is more than it gave *me*. They ſay that they diſallow of our *Authority* to *Command* them to attend our Service; be it ſo, I never reſted the Matter upon that Footing, but upon the Authority of *Chriſt*, who commands *all Chriſtians* to aſſemble themſelves together for *Chriſtian Worſhip*, as often as they can, conſiſtently with other Duties of Life, and from *their* Acknowledgement of *ours* being a *lawful Chriſtian* Way of Worſhip. They plead, farther, that they prefer *Extemporary* Prayers to *Forms* of Prayer. Who denies it? What I inſiſt upon is this, that, by their *joining* with us in the Uſe of a *Form*, occaſionally, they allow *Forms* of Prayer to be a *lawful* Way of Worſhip; and, conſequently, that they ought to join in the Uſe of them when they have no Opportunity of praying in a *better* Manner. Whether *Forms* of Prayer, or *Extemporary* Prayers be beſt, will be conſidered under the next Head.

But, beſides ſtated Times of Prayer at *Church*, and in *Families*, I muſt not omit to repeat what I have already mentioned; that daily Prayer in the *Cloſet* muſt be practiſed, for the Reaſons already given, under the Head *of the Advantages peculiar* to *private* Prayer.

Frequency of Prayer requires us, occaſionally, to lift up our Hearts to God in *ſhort Ejaculations*. As Prayer is the Life of Religion, theſe are the Life of Prayer; they keep the Flames of Devotion, like the Fire of the *veſtal Virgins*, continually burning. The Scripture affords us abundance of Inſtances of this Sort of Prayer, but, particularly the Book of *Pſalms*, the richeſt

Treaſury of warm and tender Devotion that ever was conceived, and moſt of them by the devouteſt, mere Man, that ever lived; I mean, the *royal Prophet, holy David.* He took occaſion from almoſt every Circumſtance of his Life to ſtrike out ſudden Flaſhes of Devotion, which kept his Heart continually warm. When he was in Diſtreſs, we find him comforting himſelf after this manner; *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul, put thy Truſt in God.* Upon the Receipt of an unexpected Mercy he would ſay, *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.* When *he was in Heavineſs, he would think upon God; when his Heart was vexed, he would complain,* in ſome ſuch ſhort Addreſs as this; *The Sorrows of my Heart, O God, are inlarged, O bring thou me out of my Troubles.* As ſoon as he was freed from his Trouble, he would cry out, *Turn again then unto thy reſt, for the Lord hath ſuſtained thee.* Every thing that preſented itſelf to his View raiſed his Affections, and diſcovered the Breathings of his Soul towards God and Goodneſs: The Ground bringing forth its Fruit in due Seaſon put him upon praiſing the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God; *O Lord how manifold are thy Works, in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches, ſo is the great and wide Sea alſo.* The Heavens, the Structure of his own Body, the Diſpenſations of Providence; every Obſervation that occured to his Mind, upon God, upon Nature, upon his own Condition, made him break forth into pathetick Starts of Devotion: His habitual Piety generated theſe rapturous Exclamations, and the habitual Exer-

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ciſe of them made his Piety ſtill more ardent, and blaze out the more ſtrongly. Let us imitate this good Man with Sincerity, and we ſhall daily grow more and more like him.—Neither are theſe wanting Inſtances of this Sort of Prayer in the *New Teſtament:* The *Publican*, in a deep Senſe of his Guilt and Unworthineſs, ſmote upon his Breaſt and ſaid, *God be merciful to me a Sinner:* In the like compendious Manner, *St. Stephen*, under the Hands of his Murderers, prays, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit, lay not this Sin to their charge:* Likewiſe our *Saviour* in his Agony, and, upon the Croſs, expreſſed himſelf in Petitions ſhort and ejaculatory, making conſiderable Stops and Intermiſſions between them; *Father, if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me*, &c. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*; *my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me*, &c. Such Inſtances, as theſe, ſhould inflame our Hearts, and make us ready, as Occaſions offer, to ſhoot forth our Addreſſes to Heaven. Such ſhort and fervent Ejaculations muſt needs be very prevalent with God, and have a ſtrong Influence upon the Mind; it is not the Length of the Prayer, but the Temper of the Soul which God chiefly regards: The ſhort Ejaculation of the *Publican* was more acceptable than the long Prayer of the *Phariſee:* Such ſudden Ejaculations muſt needs be full of Ardor and Fervency, being *darted* from the Heart with great Quickneſs and Vehemence. I ſpeak what every pious Breaſt has felt, and earneſtly recommend this Practice to every one who ſincerely deſires to

grow

grow in Piety and Goodneſs. But it is not *neceſſary*, that, in theſe ejaculatory Addreſſes, we ſhould uſe *Words*. *Prayer*, as I have obſerved, conſiſts in *lifting up our Souls* to God: The Conceptions of our Mind may be too ſudden, and too big for Utterance; but the Mind at the ſame Time may be *addreſſed*, or *directed*, to God in the ſame manner as when our Thoughts are clothed with Language. This kind of Prayer, for the Excellency of it, exceeds the Power of Words, and is beyond all Expreſſion. And this kind of Prayer it is in our Power to make uſe of in all Places, and at all Times; wherever we are we may ſometimes think upon God, and his Providence; in whatever manner we are employed, or engaged; in Buſineſs, in Recreations, upon the Road, or in our private Walks, we may now and then put up an ejaculatory Prayer to God; when we cannot lift up our *Hands*, we may lift up our *Hearts* to Heaven; and by thus intermingling our Prayers with our worldly Concerns, we may not only *exerciſe* and *increaſe* our *Piety*, but bring down a Bleſſing upon our honeſt Induſtry, and preſerve our Innocence in the midſt of *Buſineſs*, or *Amuſements*: By this means we may almoſt, in a *literal* Senſe, pray *without ceaſing*; and, by thus often looking up to Heaven, make our whole Life, as it were, one continued Act of *Devotion*. To qualify ourſelves for this holy Exerciſe, and by this Exerciſe for *Heaven*, we ſhould be daily converſant with the *Bible*, eſpecially the *Pſalms*: This will not only beget in us a pious Diſpoſition, which

will gradually improve into a Habit, but furniſh us with proper Sentiments and Expreſſions, for ſuch Ejaculations as I have been recommending.

And thus having conſidered the ſcriptural Acceptation of the Word *Prayer*, or *praying*; the *Nature* of Prayer, or wherein it conſiſts; the *proper Object* of our Prayers; our *Obligations*, both from *Reaſon* and *Revelation*, to pray; the *advantageous Effects* of Prayer upon our Minds; the diſtinct Advantages *peculiar* to *private* and *publick* Prayer; the *Place* where God may moſt acceptably be worſhipped; the *Times*, or *Frequency* of Prayer; there is but one Head left, and that is, to conſider the *right Manner* of performing the Duty.

CHAP. X.

The right Manner *of performing the Duty of Prayer.*

THE Succeſs of every Thing depends upon the right Manner of performing it; and if it be not performed in ſuch a Manner as to anſwer its proper Ends, an Action, tending in its natural Conſequences, to produce the moſt beneficial Effects, may be attended with the moſt pernicious ones: This is the Caſe in all the common Affairs of Life: We may not only be fruſtrated in our Purpoſes, but do ourſelves great Miſchief by an Application of unfit Meaſures, or a wrong Application of right ones: If we ſtand in need of the *Aſſiſtance* of others we may uſe ſuch

ſuch unfit Meaſures for the obtaining their *Friendſhip*, as may procure their *Enmity*. If we addreſs ourſelves to them under the Notion of paying them *Reſpect*, we may do it in ſuch an unmannerly Way as implies *Diſreſpect*, rather than *Eſteem*; and, inſtead of paying Them a *Compliment*, it may carry an *Affront*, and for *Favour* procure the higheſt Marks of *Diſpleaſure*. And the more excellent the Perſon to whom we make our Addreſſes, the more exalted his Station and Character, the greater our Dependance upon him for Succeſs and Happineſs, the greater Care is required in our Deportment to him, becauſe if we miſbehave ourſelves the Affront riſes in proportion to thoſe Circumſtances. *God Almighty*, the moſt excellent in Perfections, to whom we owe ourſelves, all our Enjoyments in this Life, and all our Expectations in a better; this great, this awful and tremendous Being, the High and Holy One that inhabiteth Eternity, this is the Object of our Prayers. What great Reaſon, therefore, have we to uſe our utmoſt Caution, in all our Addreſſes, *what* we ſay to him, *how* we expreſs ourſelves, and how we behave whenever we approach his Preſence. I know no Writer that has expreſſed himſelf more ſignificantly and handſomely on this Head, than the celebrated Dr. *Watts* in his Treatiſe of *Prayer*. What I have to offer, will fall under the following Heads:

1. The Prayers themſelves.

2. The offering them up with a proper Attention of Mind, and Fervency.

3. With a ſuitable Behaviour of Body.

1. The firſt Thing to be conſidered is, the *Prayers themſelves.* For, if when we approach the Throne of an *earthly* Prince, or attend the Levies of a *prime Miniſter*, or a more private Friend, with a *Petition*, we take care that it be drawn up in the moſt reſpectful and handſome manner, both as to Subſtance, Form, and Expreſſion, ſurely, when we approach the Throne of the Great King of Heaven, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, to humble ourſelves before him for our many provoking Sins, to acknowledge his moſt glorious Perfections, and moſt gracious Favours, and to ſupplicate the Continuance of them, the utmoſt Care ſhould be taken that every Part of our Addreſſes be the moſt proper, as to the *Matter* of them, diſpoſed into the beſt *Order*, and clothed in the moſt decent and apt Terms. This is the Argument of the great Preacher at the 5th of *Eccleſiaſtes*, ver. 2. 'Be not haſty with thy Mouth, and let not 'thine Heart be haſty to utter any thing before 'God, for God is in *Heaven*, and thou upon 'Earth.' This awful Regard, in our Addreſſes to the Divine Majeſty, we have abundant Reaſon, from *Scripture*, to imagine that God expects from us. Did he, himſelf, direct that the *Houſe*, in which he was to be worſhipped, ſhould be the moſt ſtately and magnificent that ever was built; that every Thing made uſe of in the publick Service ſhould be rich and coſtly,

ly, in ſome meaſure anſwerable to his glorious Majeſty; that all the *Sacrifices* ſhould be the moſt perfect in their Kinds, without *Spot*, or *Blemiſh*; that all the *Perſons* who had the *Honour* to wait at his Altar ſhould be free from any *perſonal Defects?* And will he not require that the Addreſſes of our *Underſtanding* and *Heart* ſhould be as perfect as it is poſſible for our Weakneſs to make them? Beſides, the more *perfect* our Prayers are, the better fitted they are to have the proper Influence upon our Minds. It may be ſaid, that God, who ſees the *Heart*, will accept of a *good Intention*, be our Prayers ever ſo *imperfect*. But the Anſwer to this is ſhort and eaſy. It is impoſſible that there *ſhould* be a right good Intention, unleſs we pray in the *beſt* Manner that we can. I am ſpeaking of *ſtated* Prayers, at *ſet* Times, whether in the *Cloſet*, or in *publick*, not of *occaſional Ejaculations*, or ſuch *circumſtantial Additions* as may be neceſſary to be made in our *private* Prayers where there was no Opportunity for *Premeditation*. I will illuſtrate this Matter by the Inſtance juſt mentioned. If an ignorant illiterate Subject ſhould have a *ſudden* Occaſion to ſpeak to his *Prince*, the Prince, if he were a wiſe and good Man, would certainly hear him with Patience and Candor, and make juſt Allowances for the Incapacity of the Perſon, and the Imperfections of his Speech; but if he knew beforehand, that at ſuch a *ſet* Time it was expected that he ſhould offer an *Addreſs*, and had an Opportunity of getting the Aſſiſtance of ſome ſen-

ſible diſcreet Friend to draw it up for him in a decent Manner, and yet would offer up a low, nonſenſical Piece of Stuff of his own penning, his Majeſty would look upon ſuch a diſreſpectful Application as an Affront, and reject his Petition with Contempt and Indignation. So, likewiſe, *we* may have *ſudden* Occaſions of ſpeaking to *God*, and in all ſuch Caſes he will moſt aſſuredly accept of the *moſt imperfect* Prayers, provided we expreſs ourſelves in the *beſt* Manner that we can; but if we ſhould raſhly preſume to addreſs God *extempore*, when we have Time and Opportunity to conſider beforehand, and to have our Prayers drawn up in a *much better* Manner, more ſuitably to the high Dignity of God's Nature, and the Meanneſs and Vileneſs of *ours*, is there not all imaginable Reaſon to conclude that he would think himſelf very rudely treated, inſtead of being honoured. Now, let us apply this plain State of the Caſe to our *private* and *publick* Prayers. The *main Subſtance* of our *Morning* and *Evening* Prayers in our *Cloſet*, are of ſo *general* a Nature, that the ſame Form may be uſed *conſtantly*, and conſequently it may be drawn up with the utmoſt Care; ſo that the moſt illiterate and ignorant People have the Opportunity, not only of *Premeditation*, but of the Aſſiſtance of *others*; and therefore are inexcuſable if they truſt to *their own* Capacity, and ſtill more culpable if they truſt to their *extempory* Conceptions.* In *publick*, whether in a *Family*, or

* Dr. *Watts*, at P. 70 of his Book on Prayer, ſays, "We "ſhould ſeek to be furniſhed with a Variety of *Expreſſion*, that "our

or at *Church*, there is the ſame Opportunity, and the ſame Reaſon, for *Premeditation*, as in our *private* Prayers, ſince no Man, let his Abilities be ever ſo great, can at *all* Times, if at *any* Time, pray ſo fully and accurately if he prays *extempore*, as if he uſes *Premeditation*; for which Reaſon Dr. *Watts* ſtrongly recommends it to his *Brethren*; and as far as Prayers are *premeditated*, they are ſo far a *Form* of Prayer to *him* that *prays*; and *all* PUBLICK Prayers, whether they be *premeditated*, or conceived *extempore*, muſt, in the Nature of Things, be a *Form* to the *Congregation*; and the Teacher *impoſes* the Uſe of it upon them as much as the *eſtabliſh'd Church* impoſes the Uſe of the *Liturgy* upon *us*. I hope the *Diſſenters* will not take Offence where there is none intended, or any juſt Occaſion given: I muſt endeavour to do Juſtice to my Subject,

 but

" our Prayers may always have ſomething *new*, and ſomething " *entertaining* in them." This is a moſt extraordinary Paſſage, and I was greatly ſurpriſed to find it in ſo ſerious a Writer. Are People to attend *publick Worſhip* as they frequent *Plays*, for *Amuſement?* Are our Paſſions to be raiſed by the *Sound* of *Words*, and by having our *Imaginations* play'd upon, or by the Alteration of the *Underſtanding* to the *Nature* of the *Object*, and the *Subject Matter* of our Prayers? If *God* be every Day the ſame, and the *Subject Matter* of our Prayers, in the main, the ſame, why may we not every Day uſe the *ſame Set of Words?* His Reaſon is this, becauſe, That is apt to make us *formal* and *cull*. Then we muſt take the more Care; and, if we beg the Aſſiſtance of the *Spirit*, he *can*, and *will*, as effectually aſſiſt our *Attention* and *Devotion* in the Uſe of the *ſame Set of Words*, as in the Uſe of *new* and *entertaining* Phraſes. Nay, the Underſtanding can more readily attend to the *Senſe* of the *ſame Set of Words*, than to *new* ones, where the Ear is conſtantly attending to *new Sounds*, and the *Fancy* to *new Images*. There is one fundamental Error that leads them into all the reſt, *viz.* That *hearing* a Perſon pray, and being *affected* by what they hear, is *praying*.—No ſuch Thing.

but I mean to do it as *inoffenſively* as poſſibly I can; and, as to the *Argument*, I will as freely *retract* what I cannot *defend*, as I now advance it. To go on, therefore, to ſpeak my Mind freely. I have in a former Chapter ſhewn, from the *Nature* of Prayer, that it is impoſſible for a *Congregation* to *join* in Prayer with a Perſon that uſes a Prayer of which they knew nothing *beforehand*, any farther, than by giving their *Aſſent* to it by ſaying *Amen* at the Concluſion of it. Neither, indeed, do I ſee how *that* can be ſafely done, without a Perſuaſion that the Perſon prays by *Inſpiration*. For, ſaying *Amen* to a Prayer, is declaring their Approbation of the *whole* and *every Part* of it, whereas they had not *Time* to *conſider* and *weigh* every Part ſo fully as will warrant ſuch an *abſolute Aſſent*. But, at preſent, I wave theſe Points. I am now ſpeaking about *Forms* of Prayer, and I repeat it again, that all *publick* Prayer muſt be a *Form* of Prayer to the *Congregation*. If the Congregation be under the *Neceſſity* of uſing a Prayer, the Uſe of that Prayer is *impoſed* upon them, and they *are* under an *abſolute* Neceſſity of uſing that or none; and if they be under the *Neceſſity* of uſing it without the Liberty of *varying* from any Part of it, it is a *Form* to *them*. If not, I ſhould be much obliged to any one that would be at the trouble of teaching me *what* a *Form* of Prayer is. Now if this be a true State of the Caſe, (as it moſt certainly is) we have brought the Matter to this ſingle Queſtion, *viz.* Whether the *Diſſenters* may not as ſafely uſe a *Form* drawn up by a

Committee of very learned, judicious, and pious Men, as by a *ſingle* Perſon, let his Qualifications for praying be ever ſo great; and ſuffer the Uſe of it to be *impoſed* upon them by *publick* Authority, as well as by the Authority of their *own Teacher* only. And this Argument is much ſtrengthened, when we conſider, what Dr. *Watts* acknowledges and bewails, the *Incapacity* of many of his *Brethren* for ſuch an Exerciſe, the Crudeneſs and Jejuneneſs, and many other Defects of their Prayers. Indeed it *muſt* be ſo; as, no doubt, it would be in the *eſtabliſhed Church*, if *all* the *Clergy* were to uſe Prayers of their OWN *compoſing*, after the manner of the *Diſſenters*. This Argument, I confeſs, proceeds upon a *Poſtulatum* that *all* the Diſſenters will not grant, *viz.* that *their* publick Prayers, and *ours*, are the *Compoſitions* of *human* Abilities, aſſiſted only by the *common* and *ordinary* Influences of the *Holy Spirit*. The famous *Barklay* anſwers for the Body of the *Quakers*. He enters their Proteſt in the following Words, Pag. 348 of his *Apology*. " But the *Limitation* we condemn is, that " whereas the *Spirit* of God ſhould be the " *immediate* Actor, Mover, Perſuader, and In- " fluencer of Man in the particular Acts of " *Worſhip*, when the Saints are met together, " this Spirit is *limited* in its Operations by ſet- " ting up a particular Man, or Men, to teach " and pray, in *Man's Will*; and all the reſt " are excluded from ſo much as believing that " they are to wait for God's Spirit to move " them

Will-Worſhip.

" them in such Things; and so they neglecting
" that which should quicken them in them-
" selves, and not waiting to *feel* the Breathings
" of *God's Spirit*, so as to obey them, are led
" to depend merely upon the Preacher, and
" hear what he will say.

True teaching of the Word of God.

" *Secondly*, in that these peculiar
" Men come not thither to meet
" with the Lord, and to wait for
" the inward Motions and Operations of his
" *Spirit*; and so *pray* as they *feel* the Spirit to
" breathe *through* them, and *in* them; and to
" preach, as they find themselves acted and
" moved by *God's Spirit*, and as *he* gives Utter-
" ance, so as to speak a Word in Season to
" refresh weary Souls, and as the present State
" and Condition of the Peoples Hearts require,
" suffering God by *his Spirit* both to *prepare*
" Peoples Hearts, and also give the Preacher
" to *speak* what may be fit and seasonable for
" them; but he hath *hammered* together, in
his Closet, according to his *own Will*, by
" his *human Wisdom* and *Literature*, and by
" stealing the Words of Truth from the Letter
" of the Scriptures, and by patching together
" other Mens Writings, so much as will hold
" him speaking an Hour while the Glass runs;
" and without waiting and feeling the inward
" Influence of the Spirit of God, he declaims
" that by *hap-hazzard*, whether it be fit and sea-
" sonable for the Peoples Condition, or no. and
" when he has ended his Sermon, he saieth his
" Prayer also in his *own Will*, and *so there is an*

" *end*

" *end of the Buſineſs.*" For the Credit of *Chriſtianity*, and the Honour of the *holy Spirit*, I am glad that this Gentleman *wrote* only in *Man*'s *Will*, by *hammering* his Book in his *Cloſet*, for he has not *ſtolen the Truth from the Letter of the Scriptures*, and it is *hap-hazzard* whether any of his Readers can tell what he means by the Spirit's *quickening them in themſelves*, and *breathing through them, and in them*, &c. For my own part, I own myſelf *uninlightened* by ſuch Phraſes, and expect to remain in *Darkneſs*: Thus much, however I can underſtand from the *whole*, that the *Quakers* pretend to *preach* and *pray*, without any Aſſiſtance from *human Wiſdom*, and *human Literature*, by the *immediate Inſpiration* of the *Spirit*; firſt *moving* them to pray and preach, and afterwards *dictating* to them the *Matter*, the *Order*, and *Words*; in ſhort, the *whole* of their *Prayers* and *Sermons*. This Gentleman wrote his *Apology* in the *Name* of the *Body* of the Quakers, and under the *Character* of a *Proteſtant*, while his Book is a *Refinement* upon *Popery*, and carries the Claim to *Infallibility* much higher than any of the *Papiſts* ever did. The *Papiſts* only aſſert that there is, ſomewhere, (for it is not yet determined where it reſts) in their Church an *Infallible Judge of Controverſies*, in order to preſerve the *Peace* of the *Chriſtian* Society; but no *Papiſts*, nor any body elſe before the Riſe of *Quakeriſm*, ever maintained that any Man who has an *Imagination* warm enough to make him *fanſy* that he *feels* the inward Motion, and Direction of the Spirit is *inſpired* by him.

In

In *Modeſty* and *Prudence* they ought to have better Proofs, to *themſelves*, of their *Inſpiration*, than a *fanciful feeling* of the *inward Breathings* of the Spirit; and I am ſure the reſt of the World muſt be *more* than *Imprudent* if they give them Credit without ſome ſuch *external* Proofs, as the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles* gave, of their being *moved by the Holy Ghoſt*.

The reſt of the Diſſenters make no ſuch large Pretenſions to the Influence of the Spirit as theſe Men do; but they have a *general* Notion of their Teacher's *praying*, though not *preaching*, by the *Spirit*, and that their being tied up to the Uſe of *Forms* of Prayer would be *ſtinting* the Spirit, and making the Service only *Will-worſhip*. As this Opinion is grounded upon a miſtaken Interpretation of ſome Texts of Scripture in *St. Paul*'s Epiſtles; *Archbiſhop* Sharp, from thoſe Words, *What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, I will pray with the Underſtanding alſo*, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 15, has explained the ſeveral Texts with inimitable Perſpicuity, and truly *Chriſtian* Temper; and I cannot do better than to tranſcribe what he has ſaid in his own Words. They are in Vol. the IVth, of his Sermons, Page 105.

'The Method I ſhall take in the diſcuſſing 'this Point ſhall be to make out theſe four fol- 'lowing Propoſitions; which if they can be 'made out, all the Difficulty that ſeems to be 'in this Argument does perfectly vaniſh.

'*Firſt* of all therefore, I ſhall ſhew, that 'praying by the Spirit in the Senſe that the 'Apoſtle meant, is ſo far from being a perpetual

'Duty

' Duty requir'd of all Chriſtians, that as far as we ' know, no Chriſtian now living can with Rea- ' ſon pretend to that Gift.

' *Secondly*, I ſhall ſhew that That which is ' now called praying by the Spirit, that is, the ' conceiving of Prayers on a ſudden without ' Study and Premeditation, and expreſſing our ' Conceptions with great Fluency and Moving- ' neſs of Words and Geſtures, is ſo far from ' being the immediate Effect of the Spirit of ' God, that generally ſpeaking it is the Effect ' of Art or Induſtry, or a preſent Heat of Tem- ' per.

' *Thirdly*, I ſhall ſhew, that if there be any ' other Notion of praying by the Spirit in Scrip- ' ture, ſuch as is to be extended to all Times ' and Ages of Chriſtianity, and is not peculiar ' to the Apoſtolical Age, that Notion will every ' Jot as well fit and ſuit with ſet Forms of Prayer, ' as with thoſe Prayers that we call Extemporary.

' *Fourthly*, I ſhall ſhew, that though we ' ſhould ſuppoſe that God, even in theſe Days, ' doth aſſiſt Men, both as to the Matter, and ' even the Words of their Prayers, yet we have ' more Reaſon to believe that the publick Pray- ' ers of the Church were indicted and contrived ' by that Spirit of God, than we have to believe ' that any Man's private Prayers are; and con- ' ſequently that when we uſe them, we pray as ' much by the Spirit as when we uſe ſudden ' conceived Prayers.

' I begin with the firſt of theſe Propoſitions, ' which is this, That praying by the Spirit in the

' Senſe

'Senſe of the Text I am now upon (which in-
'deed is the chief Text that gave Riſe to this
'Expreſſion, and accordingly the Meaning of
'the Expreſſion ought to be governed by the
'Meaning of the Text; I ſay, praying by the
'Spirit, (as the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of it) is ſo
'far from being a perpetual Duty required of
'all Chriſtians, that it is much to be doubted
'whether any Chriſtian now living can with any
'Reaſon pretend to that Gift.

'And the Reaſon is evident, becauſe this was
'one of the extraordinary miraculous Gifts,
'which God for the gaining Credit to Chriſtia-
'nity, and ſupplying the Neceſſities of the then
'Infant Church, was pleaſed to confer upon the
'Apoſtles, and other Chriſtians of that Age;
'which Gifts as Chriſtianity got footing in the
'World, did by degrees wear out, and at laſt
'perfectly ceaſed.

'Now that praying by the Spirit was one of
'thoſe extraordinary Graces, it is plain enough
'from the whole Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle in this
'Chapter; for, according to him, praying with
'the Spirit, and ſinging with the Spirit, and
'bleſſing with the Spirit, are but ſo many ſe-
'veral Exerciſes of the Gift of Languages, or
'that Power which the Chriſtians then were
'endowed with of ſpeaking in unknown
'Tongues, which they had never learned.

'I ſhall make the Matter very plain to you;
'the Church of *Corinth*, to whom St. *Paul*
'writes this Epiſtle, was at that Time favoured
'with many eminent Gifts of the Spirit; but it

'ſeems

' ſeems that ſeveral of thoſe that had theſe Gifts,
' did not make that Uſe of them, which they
' were given for: For, whereas the Gift of
' Tongues was chiefly beſtowed for the Conver-
' ſion of Infidels, to be a Sign (as the Apoſtle
' ſpeaks in Verſe the 22d of this Chapter) *not to*
' *them that believe, but to them that believe not,*
' theſe Men took a Pride in exerciſing this Gift
' in the Chriſtian Congregation, making Prayers,
' and Hymns, and Thankſgivings at their publick
' Meetings in a Language that the People under-
' ſtood not, conſequently from which they could
' receive no Benefit. This Abuſe now it is the
' Deſign of the Apoſtle to reform, and at the
' ſame Time to regulate the Exerciſe of their
' other ſeveral Gifts; and the great Rule, which
' he lays down in this Matter, is that all Things
' in the Church ought to be done with Decency
' and Order, and to the Edification of the Con-
' gregation, and that no ſpiritual Gift is any fur-
' ther valuable than as it is employed to the Be-
' nefit of others; and conſequently either let
' them not at all make Uſe of their Gift of Lan-
' guages in the Church, or if they will make
' Uſe of it, let them either themſelves, or ſome
' other for them, interpret to the People what
' they mean, ſo that the whole Congregation
' may underſtand and be edified. If we now
' take this Key, we ſhall have an eaſy Entrance
' into the Senſe of this whole Chapter.

' At this Time I ſhall concern myſelf with
' no more of it, than what is needful for the
' giving Light to my Text; let it be obſerved

" there-

' therefore that two Verſes before my Text, the
' Apoſtle gives this Advice, *viz.* in the 13th
' Verſe: *Wherefore*, ſaith he, *let him that ſpeak-*
' *eth in an unknown Tongue*, (he means ſpeaking
' in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies) *pray that he may*
' *interpret:* This Advice he backs with this
' Reaſon, in the Verſe before my Text: *For if*
' *I pray in an unknown Tongue, my Spirit pray-*
' *eth, but my underſtanding is unfruitful*; as if
' he had ſaid, the Neceſſity of ſpeaking in a
' known Tongue, or at leaſt of interpreting
' what is ſpoken in an unknown Tongue, doth
' appear from hence; that if any of us do,
' in the Congregation, pray, for Inſtance, in an
' unknown Tongue, it is true, the Spirit within
' him prayeth, or he doth indeed pray by the
' Spirit; but nevertheleſs if he make none but
' ſuch Prayers, or do not interpret ſuch when he
' makes them, his Mind, his Meaning is un-
' fruitful, yields no Profit to the Hearer, others
' receive no Benefit, no Edification, by what he
' prayeth; That is plainly the Senſe of this Verſe;
' and then it follows in the Words of my Text,
' *What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit,*
' *I will pray with the Underſtanding alſo, I will*
' *ſing with the Spirit, I will ſing with the Under-*
' *ſtanding alſo*; that is, if I do ſometimes make
' Uſe of the Gift of Tongues, that the Spirit
' hath beſtowed upon me, either in praying or
' ſinging of Pſalms; yet I will alſo take Care ſo
' to pray and ſing as to be underſtood; I will
' not be ſo wholly taken up in ſinging and pray-
' ing by the Spirit, but I will pray and ſing alſo

' as

' as others do, that have not that Gift of the ' Spirit, that is, in a Language that the Con- ' gregation underſtands as well as myſelf; or if ' I do pray by the Spirit I will at leaſt take Care ' to interpret.

' That this is the true and only Senſe here of ' praying by the Spirit, and praying with the ' Underſtanding, is undeniably plain from what ' follows in the four next enſuing Verſes; for ' thus the Apoſtle goes on in Verſes, 16, 17, 18, ' 19; *Otherwiſe when thou ſhalt bleſs with the ' Spirit*, (that is praiſe God) *how ſhall he that ' occupieth the Room of the Unlearned, ſay Amen ' at thy giving of Thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth ' not what thou ſayeſt? For thou verily giveſt ' Thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank ' my God I ſpeak with Tongues more than you all, ' yet, in the Church, I had rather ſpeak five Words ' with my Underſtanding, that by my Voice I might ' teach others, than ten thouſand Words in an un- ' known Tongue.*

' You ſee here all along that ſpeaking by the ' Spirit, is ſpeaking in an unknown Language, ' and ſpeaking with the Underſtanding is ſpeak- ' ing Words that others may underſtand: Taking ' this now to be a true Account of the Text, (as ' without doubt it is) we have got theſe four ' Things by it.

' *Firſt* of all in general, that the Gift of ' praying by the Spirit was in the Number of ' thoſe miraculous extraordinary Gifts that were ' in a plentiful Manner ſhowered down by the ' Holy Spirit upon the Apoſtles, upon this Day

' of

‘ of Pentecoſt, and by laying on their Hands
‘ communicated to others afterwards, during
‘ that Age.

‘ *Secondly*, For the more particular Account
‘ of this Gift, it was a Branch of the Gift of
‘ Tongues, or rather to ſpeak properly, it was
‘ one of the Inſtances by which the Gift of Lan-
‘ guages was expreſſed.

‘ *Thirdly*, That this Faculty of praying by the
‘ Spirit was ſo far from being the moſt uſeful or
‘ edifying, or the moſt deſirable Gift in the
‘ Church, that St. *Paul* prefers Propheſing (that
‘ is the Gift of preaching or interpreting Scrip-
‘ ture) far before it, as you may ſee in the four
‘ firſt Verſes of this Chapter; nay, he prefers
‘ praying in the ordinary Way before praying by
‘ the Spirit, telling us, that he had rather ſpeak
‘ five Words in the Church to be underſtood,
‘ than a thouſand in a unknown Language,
‘ though yet that Language was inſpired by the
‘ Spirit.

‘ *Fourthly*, From all that has been ſaid it ap-
‘ pears, that no Man now living can with any
‘ greater Reaſon pretend to this Gift of praying
‘ by the Spirit, in the Senſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks
‘ of it, than he can to the Power of ſpeaking
‘ ſtrange Languages without ever having learnt
‘ them, or than he can to the Power of diſco-
‘ vering Thoughts, or curing all Diſeaſes, or
‘ foretelling Things to come, or any other of the
‘ ſpiritual Gifts that the Apoſtle here treats of.

‘ But it may be aſked, Is there no other
Notion of praying by the Spirit than that we

' have now mentioned? Did not the Holy Spirit
' of God furniſh his Servants with Matter to pray
' for in thoſe Days, as well as Languages to pray
' in? And did he not inſpire them to pray in a
' known Language, as well as in an unknown?
' And this immediately, ſo that when they
' prayed they might be truly ſaid to be filled
' with the Holy Ghoſt.

' I anſwer, perhaps, it might, nay, for my
' part I think it probably was ſo; we have many
' Reaſons to incline us to believe that in the firſt
' Age of Chriſtianity, when the Church was
' propagated and governed in an extraordinary
' Way, and there were many ſudden emergent
' Neceſſities to be ſupplied, which could not at
' that Time be provided for in a regular Way,
' that God hath ſince taken care they ſhall be;
' I ſay, it is very probable, that, as God did in-
' ſpire ſome with a miraculous Gift of interpre-
' ting Scripture, and applying Types and Pro-
' phecies, and others with a Gift of compoſing
' Pſalms and Hymns for the Benefit of the
' Church, and others with the Gift of foretel-
' ling Things to come; he did others alſo with
' the Gift of Prayer, prompting and enabling
' them in an extraordinary Manner, to put up
' ſuch Petitions as their own Spirits could never
' have ſuggeſted to them, but which were ſuit-
' able to the preſent Neceſſities and Exigencies
' of the Church; and of thoſe Perſons it may
' truly be ſaid, that they prayed by the Inſpira-
' tion of the Holy Ghoſt: And I muſt confeſs
' of this Way of praying by the Spirit, I would

'interpret that famous and difficult Paſſage of 'St. *Paul*, in the eighth of the *Romans*, 26, '27 Ver. where he hath theſe Words: *Likewiſe*, ſaith he, *the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities; for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itſelf maketh Interceſſion for us with Groanings that cannot be uttered; and he that ſearcheth the Heart knoweth what is the Mind of the Spirit, becauſe he maketh Interceſſion for the Saints according to the Will of God.*

'It is plain that he is here ſpeaking of thoſe 'that had the firſt Fruits of the Spirit; that is, 'were endowed with extraordinary Gifts, ſuch 'as we have been all this while ſpeaking of. 'This appears from the twenty-third Verſe, and 'therefore it is moſt likely, that the Spirit's 'helping their Infirmities, and making Inter'ceſſion for them, was his extraordinary exci'ting and directing ſome particular Perſons to 'put up Prayers for the Congregation, and in'ſpiring them with ſtrong Deſires, and earneſt 'Groans after ſuch and ſuch Things; which 'tho' they could not fully comprehend the 'Meaning of, yet God, who knew the Mind 'of the Spirit, ſaw that they were for the good 'of the Church.

'Thus I am ſure St. *Chryſoſtom*, (the beſt In'terpreter of Scripture of all the Ancients) ex'pounds the Place, whoſe Words, becauſe they 'are remarkable, and give a clear Account of 'the Text, I ſhall tranſlate to you:

'Having

' Having named this Text, he tells us, " That " it was a very obſcure Paſſage, becauſe many " of thoſe Miracles, which were done in the " Time when St. *Paul* wrote that Epiſtle, were " now ceaſed in the World. Therefore, ſaith " he, in order to the opening the Senſe of this " Place, it will be neceſſary to acquaint you with " the State of Things at that Time. Now what " was that? Why, God beſtowed ſeveral Gifts " on all thoſe that undertook the Profeſſion of " Chriſtianity; which Gifts were alſo called by " the Name of the Spirit. One, for Inſtance, " obtained the Gift of Prophecy, and did fore- " tel future Events; another had the Gift of " Wiſdom, and inſtructed the People; another " had the Gift of Healing, and he cured the " Sick; another had the Gift of Power, and " he raiſed the Dead; another had the Gift of " Tongues, and he ſpake in ſeveral Languages. " Moreover, with all theſe there was a Gift of " Prayer, which is alſo called by the Name of " the Spirit; and he that had this, prayed for " all the Multitude: For, becauſe, not know- " ing many of thoſe Things which are good " for us, we deſire thoſe that are not (as it is " ſaid here, we know not what to pray for as " we ought) the Gift of Prayer came upon " ſome Man; and he ſtood up in the Name of " all, to deſire that which was good for the " Church in common, and taught others to do " it. And he that was thought worthy of this " Gift, ſtood with much Compunction, and " many Groans (ſuch as proſtrate Man's Mind

" before God) and asked those Things that were " for the publick Benefit; correspondent there- " unto, in our Time, is the Minister of the " Congregation, when he offers to God the " Prayers for the People." Thus far St. *Chry-* ' *sostom.*

' But now taking all this for granted, that ' Men in those Days, especially the publick ' Ministers of the Church, were thus immedi- ' ately inspired by the Holy Ghost in their ' Prayers for the Congregation, yet it doth not ' from hence follow, that any Christian now ei- ' ther is so inspired, or ought to expect it. For ' this you see was one of the Charismata, one ' of the spiritual Gifts peculiar to that Age; and ' there is not the same Reason that it should be ' vouchsafed now. And if any one would ' make us believe he is endowed with such a ' Gift, he ought, in Reason, to give us Evi- ' dence of his having some of the other Gifts ' that were then common in the Church. If he ' can infallibly expound all difficult Passages of ' Scripture, or read the Hebrew Bible in his ' Mother Tongue, having yet never learned ' that Language; then we may be inclined to ' believe that he can pray by the Spirit, as those ' apostolical Persons did.

' But what then is the Sense of St. *Paul*, ' when he bids you not to quench the Spirit, ' 1 Ep. *Thess.* v. 19. Is not this a Command ' that concerns all Christians? And is not the ' Meaning of it that they should not stifle the ' Inspiration of the Spirit, when they are at

' Prayers,

' Prayers, by any ſet Form, but freely ſpeak as
' the Spirit gives them Utterance?

' I anſwer, that this Text alſo refers to thoſe
' extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit we have been
' all this while ſpeaking of, as appears by the
' Precept which follows after, *Quench not the*
' *Spirit, deſpiſe not Propheſying.* And therefore
' it doth no way concern us, otherwiſe than
' by way of Accommodation; and the plain
' Senſe of it is no more than this, That thoſe
' Chriſtians, whom God had bleſſed with thoſe
' miraculous Powers, whether they were the
' Gifts of Healing, or of Tongues, or any of the
' reſt, they ſhould be very careful that they did
' not, either by their careleſs Life, or Neglect to
' make uſe of them to good Purpoſes, occaſion
' God's withdrawing of them: For if they made
' an ill Uſe, or no Uſe of them, he that gave
' them would take them away; that heavenly
' Fire of the Spirit would, by theſe means, be
' extinguiſhed in their Hearts.

' And thus much let it ſuffice to have ſpoken
' to the firſt Point, which I have been the
' longer upon, for the ſake of explaining thoſe
' Texts of Scripture which have moved ſo many
' Scruples in Mens Minds.

' *Secondly*, I now come to the ſecond Point,
' which is this; that That which we are now-
' a-days uſed to call praying by the Spirit, that
' is the conceiving Prayers on a ſudden, with-
' out Study and Premeditation, and expreſſing
' our Conceptions with great Fluency and Mov-
' ingneſs of Speech and Action, is not often, as

'we are apt to take it, the immediate Effect of 'the Spirit of God, and Inſpiration; but gene- 'rally ſpeaking the Work of Art or Induſtry, or 'the preſent Heat of a Man's Head.

'Far am I here from diſparaging the Gift of 'voluntary and extemporary Prayer, or crying 'down the Uſe of it; it is certainly, as all other 'Accompliſhments that a Man has, the very 'Gift of God, and great Benefit may redound 'both to a Man's ſelf, and others, by a prudent 'and diſcreet Uſe of it; * and much further am 'I from denying the Neceſſity of the Holy 'Spirit's Concurrence, or Aſſiſtance in our 'Prayers; on the contrary I believe, that who- 'ſoever is not aſſiſted by the Spirit when he 'prays, cannot pray as he ought to do; and I 'doubt not but thoſe that pray with a Form, 'and without one, if they be pious good Per- 'ſons, are aſſiſted by the Spirit when they pray. 'But this I ſay, the Faculty of praying plau- 'ſibly, fluently, and movingly, in an extempo- 'rary Way, if we conſider it in itſelf, is not, 'in theſe Days, an inſpired Gift, but rather a 'Gift of Nature, or an Acquiſition of Heart, 'or rather to ſpeak properly, a Gift acquired by 'Art in a Perſon that has a Nature and Genius

'fitted

'* The Congregation may be *inſtructed* and *moved* by ſuch 'Prayers, as they are by a good *Sermon*, but they cannot join 'with him in offering up, at the ſame Time, the ſeveral Parts 'of his Prayer, becauſe while he is praying, *i. e.* ſpeaking to 'God, they are employed in attending to what he ſays, and have 'no Time to ſpeak any Part of it in their own Minds to God, by '*directing* it to him, without which *Direction* of the Mind it can- 'not be *Prayer*.'

' fitted for it; my Reaſons for this are very
' briefly theſe:

' *Firſt* of all, There are as certain Rules and
' Methods for the attaining this Faculty of vo-
' luntary extemporary Prayer, as there are for
' the attaining any other Art or Science: The
' Truth of this appears both from the Books
' that have been written to teach Men the
' Gift of praying, and the Experience of many
' who have been eminent in this Gift, who, if
' they be aſked, cannot deny but that they
' came by it in the ſame Way that they come by
' other acquired Gifts, that is to ſay, by reading
' the Word of God, and other divine Books,
' by Study and Meditation, by well digeſting in
' their Minds the ſeveral Heads of Matter, that
' are either to be confeſſed or prayed for, or
' Thanks returned for them, by treaſuring up
' in their Memory out of the Scripture, and
' other good Books, apt and fit Phraſes for the
' expreſſing theſe Matters; and laſtly, and prin-
' cipally by much Uſe and Exerciſe; and there
' is no doubt but whoever uſes this Method,
' ſhall, in a little Time, attain to a competent
' Skill, and Readineſs in this Gift of extempo-
' rary Prayer; ſuppoſing that he hath but a ſuf-
' ficient Stock of natural Parts, and a Genius
' that lies that Way: I add theſe two laſt
' Things, becauſe every Art requires a peculiar
' Capacity and Fitneſs of Temper in him that is
' to learn it; ſo that though it have in it certain
' and fixed Maxims, and Precepts, and ſo is
' teachable, yet it is not teachable to every Per-

'ſon, becauſe every Perſon is not qualified with 'natural Abilities for the learning it. There 'are ſeveral that may prove very good Mathe-'maticians, that yet would make but very bad 'Orators, becauſe their Parts are ſuited very 'well for one Science, but not ſo well for the 'other, and this Rule holds in this very Gift 'we are ſpeaking of, as well as others. Thoſe 'that have a competent Memory, and a good 'Aſſurance, and a ready Preſence of Mind to 'recollect Things on a ſudden, and a Dexterity 'in putting them handſomely together, and ex-'preſſing their Conceptions eaſily and naturally; 'theſe are much better contrived in their Na-'tures for the Gift of Prayer, and ſhall much 'ſooner obtain it, than thoſe whoſe natural 'Talents lie another Way; yet for all this, the 'whole Thing is an Art notwithſtanding.

'And that it is ſo, is, in the ſecond Place, 'very eaſily diſcoverable to any diligent Obſer-'ver, even from the Way of the Management 'and Performance of it: For if ever we have 'given ourſelves to obſerve the Prayers of this 'Kind, we ſhall find that though the Speaker 'doth not confine himſelf to any particular ſet 'Form, but varies his Prayers every Time; yet 'in the Compaſs of a few Prayers, both the 'ſame Heads of Matter will return, and the 'very ſame Set of Phraſes and Expreſſions like-'wiſe, though perhaps not marſhalled juſt in 'the ſame Method or Order; ſo that any one 'who has long been uſed to a particular Perſon, 'may, upon the reading of a Prayer copied

'from

' from his Mouth, be able to ſay without a Miſ-
' take this Prayer is of the Compoſure of ſuch
' a Man. If now this be true, doth it not
' ſhew that the Gift of praying of a ſudden,
' is rather the Effect of Art and Uſe, than of
' the immediate Inſpiration of the Spirit? Nay!
' is it not an Evidence that theſe Sort of Prayers
' are not ſo ſudden and extemporary as we take
' them for? But are really owing to a ſet Form
' or Scheme, both of Matter and Phraſes, which
' the Perſon that uſeth them hath fixed in his
' Mind, though we diſcover it not?

' But, *Thirdly*, there is yet further Evidence,
' that the Faculty of extemporary Prayer is not
' from the immediate Inſpiration of the Spirit,
' but from ſomething elſe; becauſe thoſe that
' are happieſt at this kind of Way, cannot al-
' ways pray alike, but at ſeveral Times find a
' great Difference in their Performances: Some-
' times they can with great Freedom pour out
' their Souls unto God, as the Word is, at other
' Times they are much ſtreightened in Spirit;
' ſometimes a great Plenty of Matter offers it-
' ſelf to them, and they can utter it with great
' Volubility of Tongue, and Aptneſs of Ex-
' preſſion, and excite ſtrange Paſſions and Af-
' fections in the Hearers; at other Times they
' are barren and dry, and their Words come
' with Difficulty; and whilſt their Inventions
' are at work, in ſearching for new Matter, they
' are forced to fill up the intermediate Spaces
' with ſuch Words and Phraſes as firſt come to
' hand or are moſt at their Tongue's End, or

' elſe

' elſe with the Repetition of the ſame Thing ' over again. It is no Diſparagement to any ' Man's Parts, ſometimes to be reduced to theſe ' Inconveniences; for the eloquenteſt Man in ' the World, if he ſpeak without Premeditation, ' and thinks himſelf obliged to ſpeak a conſide- ' rable Time, cannot avoid them: But in the ' mean time this is a ſhrewd Argument that ' theſe kinds of Prayers are not incited or dic- ' tated by the Holy Ghoſt; for he cannot be ' ſuppoſed to be ever at a Loſs for furniſhing ' thoſe Tongues that he makes his Inſtruments, ' with what is next to be ſpoken.

' But, *Fourthly*, if what has been ſaid be not ' true, if the Faculty of praying eloquently and ' devoutly on a ſudden, be not a natural Gift, ' or acquired Art, but the immediate Inſpira- ' tion of the Spirit, as ſome of us have thought, ' it will be a hard Matter to rid ourſelves of ſe- ' veral Conſequences which we ſhould be loth ' to own.

' I only name theſe two, firſt, it will follow ' from hence that all thoſe Prayers, that are ' made in this Way, have in them as much Di- ' vinity, as much infallible Truth, and are of ' as great Authority as the Word of God: And ' that if they be put into Writing, they ought ' to be as much reverenced by us, and by all ' Chriſtians, as the holy Scripture, for accord- ' ing to this Doctrine, the Holy Ghoſt is as ' much the Author of theſe as he is of the in- ' ſpired Books.

' And,

' And, ſecondly, another Conſequence of this ' Doctrine is this, that upon Suppoſition hereof ' we muſt be forced to father upon the Holy ' Ghoſt, not only all the Indecencies, all the ' Indiſcretions, all the vain Repetitions, or Im- ' pertinencies, that any extemporary Prayers that ' have been put up in the Church have had in ' them: But if there have been any thing worſe ' than theſe; if ever any rude Language hath ' been given to God Almighty; if ever any falſe ' Repreſentations have been made of his Attri- ' butes; if ever any unſound Doctrines have ' been couched in Prayer, tending to Faction, or ' Rebellion, or the like; all theſe Things muſt ' have the Patronage of the Spirit, who muſt ' be ſuppoſed to be the Author, or Inſpirer of ' them.

' But I take no Pleaſure in mentioning theſe ' Things, and therefore I will not inſiſt upon ' them, but paſs on to the third general Propo- ' ſition I am to make out, and that is this: If ' there be any other Notion of praying by the ' Spirit in Scripture, ſuch as is to be extended ' to all Times and Ages of Chriſtianity, and is ' not peculiar to the firſt, that Notion will every ' whit as well ſuit with Forms of Prayer, as ' with theſe that are conceived upon the ſudden ' and preſent Occaſion.

' There is a Spirit of Prayer ſpoken of in ' Scripture, which I doubt not but God hath ' endued, and doth and will endue his People ' with unto the End of the World; and per- ' haps this Phraſe of praying in the Spirit, or by

‘ the Spirit may, in one or two Texts, be uſed
‘ in the ſame Signification: So that to pray by
‘ the Spirit ſhall mean the ſame Thing as to
‘ have the Spirit of Prayer; and in this Senſe
‘ nobody will queſtion that praying by the Spirit
‘ is a perpetual Duty, is of perpetual Uſe, and
‘ denotes a perpetual Aſſiſtance of the holy Spi-
‘ rit of God.

‘ But now what is this Spirit of Prayer?
‘ Why nobody that reads the Scripture, and
‘ conſiders how that Term is there uſed, but
‘ will be ſatisfied that it imports neither more
‘ nor leſs than the Grace of praying as we ought
‘ to do: Juſt as the Spirit of Wiſdom, the
‘ Spirit of Knowledge, the Spirit of Truth, or
‘ the Spirit of Meekneſs, are thoſe ſeveral Graces
‘ and Virtues of Wiſdom, Knowledge, Truth,
‘ and Meekneſs, that are wrought in us by the
‘ Holy Spirit, ſo that whoever reverently and
‘ humbly addreſſeth himſelf to God Almighty,
‘ ſeriouſly acknowledging on one hand his own
‘ Vileneſs, and Unworthineſs, and manifold
‘ Neceſſities; and on the other hand God's in-
‘ finite Power, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs;
‘ profeſſing to depend upon him entirely, dread-
‘ ing his Diſpleaſure; earneſtly ſeeking his
‘ Grace and Favour, and devoutly rendering
‘ Thanks to him for all his Mercies; ſuch a Man
‘ hath the Spirit of Prayer. When he prays
‘ with this Mind, with theſe Diſpoſitions, with
‘ theſe devout Affections, he truly prays by the
‘ Spirit, becauſe theſe Qualities are wrought in
‘ him by the Spirit of God; he had not had

' them but thro' the Influence and Aſſiſtance of
' the Holy Ghoſt: But now what I beſeech
' you is all this, either to praying by a Form,
' or praying in an extemporary Way? Why
' may not I be thought to have theſe Qualifi-
' cations, theſe devout Affections, this Ardor
' and Fervency of Mind toward God, when
' I pray in Words ready made to my Hands,
' as well as when I pray in Words that I thought
' not on before? And conſequently why muſt
' I be ſaid to pray by the Spirit one way, and
' not in the other? Add to this, in the laſt Place,
' which is the fourth Propoſition I am to ſpeak
' to, that though we ſhould ſuppoſe that God,
' even in theſe Days, doth aſſiſt Men both as
' to the Matter, and even the Words of their
' Prayers; yet we have as much Reaſon to be-
' lieve that the publick Prayers of the Church
' were indicted and contrived by that Spirit of
' God, as we have to believe that any Man's
' private Prayers are; and conſequently, that
' when we uſe them we pray as much by the
' Spirit, as when we uſe extemporary Prayer.

' This Propoſition is ſo evident, that I need
' ſpeak very few Words towards the clearing of
' it. The Thing lies here, whether is it not,
' at leaſt, as likely that when a Company of
' learned, religious, devout Men, are met toge-
' ther, by the Command of Authority, to con-
' ſider of a publick ſtanding Liturgy to be uſed
' in the Church, and ſpare no Care, nor Pains,
' nor Study, to form one as exactly as may be,
' according to the Will of God declared in Holy

' Scripture;

‘ Scripture; and not only ſo, but earneſtly de-
‘ ſire of God the Aſſiſtance and Direction of his
‘ Spirit to go along with them in that Work: I
‘ ſay, whether is it not at leaſt as probable that
‘ ſuch Men as theſe, taking this Method, ſhall
‘ be extraordinarily aſſiſted by the Spirit in car-
‘ rying on this Undertaking? Nay, (and if the
‘ Spirit now-a-days does vouchſafe ſuch Inſpira-
‘ tions) ſhall be immediately inſpired, both as
‘ to the Matter and the Words that they agree
‘ upon, as it is probable that a particular Perſon
‘ that comes up in a Congregation ſhall, with-
‘ out any Premeditation or Care of his, be thus
‘ inſpired? Can we reaſonably imagine that
‘ God's Spirit will indite a Prayer for this latter
‘ Man, will dictate to him what he is to ſay,
‘ and will take no care of the former, give
‘ them no Aſſiſtance in the forming of their
‘ Prayers? Sure the Thing is inconceivable! and
‘ yet this is directly the Caſe of our Common-
‘ Prayer on one hand, and extemporary publick
‘ Prayer on the other; ſo that if we will not be
‘ partial in our giving Judgment, we ought to
‘ think that when we pray by the publick Li-
‘ turgy, we pray at leaſt as much, if not more,
‘ the Prayers of the Spirit, as when we go along
‘ with a Man that uſes his extemporary Faculty.

‘ And thus I have gone through the four
‘ Points I propoſed, and I hope by this Time
‘ you are convinced what little Force there is
‘ in all that Noiſe that has been made about
‘ praying by the Spirit, to make us quit our
‘ publick Liturgy for extemporary Prayer.’

Before

Before I quit this Head, ſhould I ſay nothing of our *eſtabliſhed Liturgy*, I might be ſuſpected, perhaps, to have as mean, and as bad, an Opinion of it, as the Authors of the *Candid Inquiſitions*; and, with them, to deſire to ſee it *alter'd*, or rather to ſee a *new* one eſtabliſhed in its room. I deſire ſincerely to be as *candid* in my *Remarks*, as they can poſſibly think themſelves to be in their *Diſquiſitions*; and *their* Candor ought to make them believe me when I ſay ſo: But *Juſtice* intitles me to the Liberty of ſpeaking my Mind as ingenuouſly, if I ſpeak it as decently, as they have done. Firſt of all, as to the *Candor* of their *Diſquiſitions*, I muſt be of Opinion, that whatever their *Intention* may be, their *Conduct* is not *quite* ſo candid as might have been expected on ſuch an Occaſion. There *ſeems* to be a ſtronger Inclination to raiſe *Objections*, than to *commend* our Liturgy. They have been induſtrious to collect together every Thing that has been urged againſt it, but not ſo forward to do Juſtice to its *allowed* Excellencies. It muſt be capable of Improvements, in ſome Particulars, as it is the Compoſition of *fallible* Men; but, with all its Faults and Defects, it has, *upon the whole*, been deemed, not only by the Members of *our own* Communion, but by *foreign Proteſtant* Churches, to be a moſt excellent one; as any one may ſee that will read *Durell*'s Account of them. Had theſe Projectors been a little *more* candid in their *Cenſures*, and more moderate in their *Demands*, they would have been better intitled to the Attention of the *Legiſlature*;

but,

but, ſhould the Attempt ſucceed upon the Plan of *their Specimen*, many prudent Perſons think, they have Reaſon to dread the Conſequences of it upon the Peace of *Church* and *State*. They complain often of *Prejudice* in *Favour* of our preſent Liturgy; but, in my Judgment, they have taken a likely Method to *increaſe*, rather than *leſſen* them; for when any Perſon, or Thing, is *unreaſonably* decried, from a Spirit of generous Reſentment, it creates more *Friends* than *Enemies*. As to *myſelf*, I can only *wiſh* and *pray*, that the Glory of God, and the general Good, may be moſt effectually promoted; but I am clearly of Opinion with good Archbiſhop *Sharp*, that we need not doubt but that we may be *ſaved* in the Uſe of our Liturgy as it is, and, therefore, I am not only contented with it, but thankful for it; though I ſhould be much better pleaſed if ſome Alterations could be made without a *probable Hazard* of having it *worſe* upon *the whole*. I pray God that our Attendance and Behaviour in the Uſe of it, may be anſwerable to its Excellency. To this End we muſt always pray with *Attention* and *Fervency*.

The firſt Thing requiſite to the offering up Prayers acceptably, is *Attention of Mind*; and this is ſo eſſential a Part, that there can be no ſuch Thing as *Prayer* without it: For, *Prayer* is an Act of the *Mind*, an Addreſs of the *Soul* to God; and, therefore, if while we give our Attendance at Church, and *ſeem* to join in the Service by uſing the proper Geſtures, and making our proper Reſponſes; or, if when we pretend to pray in our

our *Closets*, our *Thoughts* are otherwise employed, we can no more be said to be *praying* all that Time, than a Thing could be said to pray that is moved by Wires, and artfully made to perform the same Actions, and pronounce the same Words. There can be no Difference between Sounds uttered, and Actions performed by such a *Machine*, and by a *Man*, unless the *Mind* of the Man accompanies the *Body*; *then* only it becomes a *rational* Act, when it expresses the *inward* Sentiments and Dispositions of the *Soul*, DIRECTED at that Time to *God*; and, unless it be a *rational* Act, it is impossible that it should be a *religious* one: So that we can have no Pretence to expect the *Benefits* of Prayer, when we do not in reality pray at all. If one of our Fellow-Creatures were to pronounce a Petition to *us* in the most submissive Posture, and with the most moving Tone, and we knew, at the same time, that he was *thinking* upon something else, we should hardly grant his Request. On the contrary, we should look upon his *dissembled* Application, as an Indignity that deserved our Resentment, rather than a kind Acceptance. And why should we imagine that the great God will accept of those *hypocritical Appearances*, as Acts of *Worship* deserving his favourable Regard, which would be rejected with Scorn and Anger by *Men* from one another? *Hypocrisy* consists in *seeming* or *pretending* to be what we are not; and while we are *repeating* any Part of the Service, our *Thoughts* at the same Time not accompanying our *Words* we *seem*, or *pre-*

tend, to be *ſpeaking*; that is, *directing* our *Minds* to God, when they are directed to another Object; we *appear* to be performing Acts of *internal* Humiliation, Adoration, Thankſgiving, or Application for Bleſſings, but in *reality* we are doing ſomething elſe. This *feigned* and *counterfeit* Addreſs muſt needs be highly provoking, as it is greatly affronting, to the *omniſcient* God, who ſeeth all the Thoughts and Motions of our Soul. By ſuch *Inattention* of Mind at our Prayers we not only loſe our Title to all the Advantages which we might otherwiſe expect from them, but we turn them into *Sin*, and, inſtead of *Worſhip*, offer an *Inſult* to the divine Majeſty. I do not here ſpeak only of ſuch (and, I am afraid, ſome ſuch do often attend the *outward* Service) who come not with any *Intention* of joining *inwardly* in their *Hearts*, but out of Curioſity, a prudent Regard to Decency, out of Cuſtom, or Intereſt; but I likewiſe mean thoſe who, tho' they *do* come to Church upon a *religious* Principle, and with a *general Deſign* of *praying* to God, do, nevertheleſs, for want of due Care, ſuffer their *Minds* frequently to wander from the Buſineſs of their Devotions, while perhaps their Lips may be employed in uttering the Words, and their Bodies comply with the required Geſtures. Nay, I am afraid, there are ſome who, notwithſtanding ſome *general Intention* of worſhipping God by coming to *Church*, do nothing more than *barely come* thither, and add one to the Congregation, without concerning themſelves at all in the Service. This is the

higheſt Degree of *Inattention* that any one can be guilty of, who comes with *any ſort* of religious Deſign. But we are all of us guilty, whenever our *Thoughts* are engaged on any other Subject than that of our Prayers; and in proportion as we are *oftener*, or *longer*, during the Time of the Service, thinking of ſomething elſe, we are ſo much the more inattentive, our Prayers are ſo much the more broken, unconnected, imperfect, and affrontive to God.

But not only our *Thoughts*, but our *Affections*, alſo, muſt be engaged in the Buſineſs of our Devotions. When we repeat the *Confeſſion*, (for Inſtance) it is not enough that we have in our *Minds* the Thoughts which are expreſſed in the Words, and *direct* them to *God*, but our Minds muſt be ſuitably *affected*. When we confeſs our Sins to God, we muſt be ſorry for them, and aſhamed of them; we muſt be afraid of the Diſpleaſure of our offended God, and anxiouſly ſollicitous to appeaſe him. Without theſe Diſpoſitions, the *Deſign* of Confeſſion will never be anſwered: For, God does not require this Act of Worſhip for his *own ſake*, but for *ours*: He, who ſees our *Hearts*, does not want to be *informed* of our Sins, but he requires us to *acknowledge* them, that our Acknowledgment of them may be the Means of working in us a *Reformation*; which it always will be, as far as we confeſs our Sins with proper Diſpoſitions of Mind. And thus it is with regard to all the other Parts of our Prayers. When the *Abſolution* is pronounced, it ſhould fill our Minds with

Comfort and Joy, to hear God declaring by his Minister, that if we have been sincere in the Profession of our *Repentance*, our Sins are pardoned through the Merits of *Christ*'s Death. When we celebrate the *Praises* of God, we should not only *think* of those Attributes which we then laud and magnify, but be affected by them, that we may be the more ready to obey him, to trust in him, to love and imitate him, as far as such imperfect Creatures are capable of resembling the infinite Perfections of our Creator. When we *thank* God for his Blessings and Mercies, they not only ought to be the Subject of our *Thoughts* at that Time, but we should so think of them, and be so gratefully moved by them, as to be inclined to make suitable Returns of Love and Duty. Our *Intercessions* for others should be accompanied with Benevolence and Charity, and, then, this Exercise of our brotherly Love will be the Means of increasing it. By *praying* for them affectionately, we shall *love* and *serve* them more affectionately. When we ask any Thing of God in Prayer, we should do it with an Earnestness answerable to the great Importance of the Things that we desire. It was the *fervent*, that was the *effectual*, Prayer of the righteous Man that availed so much. Prayer without Ardency, is like Incense without Fire, that will never send up a sweet Perfume to Heaven. It is from the Strength and Fervor of the *Affections* that Prayer hath its Life and Efficacy. To pray without having our *Affections* raised, is to offer up to God, I will not say, a lame and sickly

ſickly Sacrifice, but a dead and polluted one. Have we *Paſſions* that actuate us on all other Occaſions, and ſhall they be aſleep and quite unactive, where the Objects of them are moſt affecting? Is it required that we ſhould be grieved and confounded at the Thoughts of our Sins, and ſhall we *feel* none of theſe *inward* Movements when we confeſs them to *God*, the Perſon offended? Can we have an *awful* Senſe of God's tremendous Perfections, and *feel* no awful Senſations when we acknowledge them? Can we have a *grateful* Senſe of his Goodneſs to us, and *feel* no grateful Emotions when we thank him for his Bleſſings and Mercies? This is *unnatural*, *impoſſible*, contrary to all our Experience of *human Nature*, which muſt operate after the ſame Manner at our *Prayers* as it does at other Times; contrary to the Practice of holy Men recorded in Scripture; of *Jacob* when he wreſtled with the Angel, and *made his Supplication* to him; of *Moſes* when he prayed for Forgiveneſs for the *Iſraelites*; of *David* when *his Heart was hot within him*, when *the Fire kindled* with an holy Flame that burſt out with Vehemency of Expreſſion; of our *bleſſed Saviour*, who prayed to God in his Agony with *ſtrong Crying and Tears*, and did *ſweat great Drops of Blood*. Languid and ſpiritleſs Addreſſes are as contrary to *Precept*, as they are to *Nature* and *Examples*; for, we are commanded to *ſtrive in Prayer*, to *pray exceedingly*, to *pray earneſtly*, and to *labour fervently in Prayer*. Thus we muſt pray with our *Heart*, as well as our

Underſtanding. It cannot be *Prayer* unleſs we *ſpeak* to God with our *Minds*, unleſs our *Thoughts* be *directed* to him; ſo neither can our Prayers be *Devotions*, unleſs they be accompanied with *pious Affections*.

But tho' we all of us might, with due Care, pray with more *Attention* and *Devotion* than we have done; yet, the very beſt Performances, of the very beſt of us, will be *imperfect* ones; and, therefore, while I am endeavouring to awaken the Careleſs, and to quicken the Indolent, I muſt be careful not to diſcourage the well-meaning *Chriſtian*.

In the firſt Place, we, all of us, find a Difficulty in keeping our Minds fixed, for any conſiderable Time, upon an *inviſible* Object. This Difficulty ariſes chiefly from our having been ſo conſtantly habituated to *ſenſible* Objects, that our Thoughts naturally direct themſelves thither. As we have been ſo much accuſtomed to the Exerciſe of our Senſes, and are perpetually ſurrounded with ſenſible Things, they are apt to ingroſs our Attention. But the Generality of Mankind, becauſe they cannot ſee God with their bodily Eyes, find ſome Difficulty in directing their Minds to a Being of which they have no *Idea*; and a greater Difficulty, ſtill, in keeping them ſo directed for ſo long a Time as the Performance of this Duty requires.—And, therefore, the only Ways by which we can naturally acquire a proper *Attention* to our Prayers, and a Capacity of *directing* our Minds to God, the Object of them, muſt be, firſt, to accuſtom our-

ourſelves, at *other* Times, to think upon him, upon his Nature, Attributes, and Providence. This (as I have already obſerved under the Head of *ſhort* Ejaculations) may be done, not only in our *Cloſets*, when the neceſſary Affairs of Life will permit us to retire for *Reading* and *Meditation*, but we may often do it while we are performing the Duties of our Station; not only when we are alone, but when we are in Company. In *all* Places there will be vacant Intervals, when we may employ our Thoughts on other Things beſides thoſe which concern our *worldly* Buſineſs, even while we are attending upon it. And, if at *other* Times we uſe ourſelves to think of a Being who made us, and every Thing elſe about us; if we make the Thoughts of his providential Care over us, and tender Mercies towards us, *familiar* to us; if we often conſider this our Relation and Obligation to him, and our Dependance upon him; but, withal, how unworthily, how undutifully, how ungratefully we have behaved towards this bountiful Lord and Maſter; I ſay, if we acquire a *Habit* of thinking in this Manner, we ſhall not find it ſo difficult to think of *God* in his *own Houſe*, and to *direct* thoſe Thoughts to him *there*, which we have accuſtomed ourſelves to entertain in our Minds in *other* Places. But, if we never uſe ourſelves to think upon *God*, and the *Subject Matter* of our *Prayers*, at any other Time than when we come to *Church*, or to *private* Prayers, we ſhall not be able to do it *then*. If we would be truly devout, we muſt

acquire a *Habit* of *Reflection*; I mean, this Kind of *practical Reflection*; for, a Man may have his Mind ſtored with great Variety of *Learning*, and be very *contemplative*, and yet as void of *pious* Sentiments and Diſpoſitions, as the Man whoſe Thoughts are continually employed in a Circle of *Buſineſs*, or *Pleaſure*, and, conſequently, be as *inattentive* and *indevout* at his Prayers.

But, farther, as ſoon as we enter the Church, or our Cloſet, we ſhould immediately recollect ourſelves that we are going to addreſs *God*, and that we are immediately to baniſh from our Minds all other Thoughts whatſoever. And this conſtant Method of recollecting ourſelves at our firſt Entrance into the Church, (which it is in every one's Power to follow) tho' it will not ſecure us from *all* Wanderings, yet will it be a conſiderable Help to us in fixing our Attention to the Buſineſs of our *Devotion*; eſpecially, if we be careful not to divert our Attention *from* it by talking to others, or looking about upon external Objects, which will ſoon carry away our Thoughts along with them.

Speaking of the Difficulty of directing our Minds to *God*, as he is an *inviſible* Object, a Friend of mine ſuggeſted a very ingenious Thought, *viz.* That as the *Man Chriſt Jeſus* is PERSONALLY united with the *Godhead*, it might be of Uſe to ſome People, in order to fix their Attention, to direct their Devotions to *him*. Every one has an Idea of the *Perſon* of *Chriſt's Human* Nature, and may as eaſily direct their Minds to it, as we can direct them to the Perſon

ſon of any *other* Man, or as they prayed to *Chriſt* when he was on *Earth*; and the *Human* Nature being equally *united* to the *Divine* in *Heaven*, there can be no *Idolatry* in ſuch Worſhip any more than there was *then*.

Theſe are the only *natural* Ways, that I can think of, for *fixing our Attention*, and *directing* our Minds to *God*; without which, as I have obſerved to you, we cannot be ſaid to *pray* to him, or have juſt Grounds to hope that he will pay any other Regard to our Service, than to puniſh us for the *Inſincerity* of it. As to thoſe *Diſpoſitions* which ought to accompany our Prayers, in order to render them, in a proper Senſe, *Devotion*; and an acceptable Service, we muſt not be *too much* diſcouraged at the frequent *Coldneſs* and *Languor* of our Addreſſes. The very ſame Cauſes which make it ſo difficult for us to keep our *Attention fixed*, make it difficult for us to pray with *Fervency*. Our habitual Attention and Attachment to worldly and ſenſual Matters take Poſſeſſion of our *Hearts*, while they engage our *Thoughts*. Such an Intimacy with them naturally begets an *Affection* for them, which, in proportion to its Strength, will weaken our *ſpiritual* Affections. The more *paſſionately* we purſue, or enjoy, worldly and ſenſual Pleaſures, the leſs we ſhall be affected with *heavenly* Thoughts and Exerciſes. Theſe two Paſſions are directly oppoſite, and at continual Variance with one another; inſomuch, that if we be *worldly-minded* and *ſenſual* in our Diſpoſition, we ſhall be proportionably *indevout* in our *Prayers*

ers to God, becauſe our Affections are placed upon other Objects. And, God knows, ſuch is the Corruption and Weakneſs of our Nature, ſince the Fall of *Adam*, ſuch its ſtrong Bias towards *worldly* and *ſenſual* Things, and ſo converſant are we with thoſe Objects, naturally agreeable to us, that it is exceeding hard to keep ourſelves from being too fond of them. But, if they *do engroſs* our Affections, our *Prayers* will be *lifeleſs* and *irkſome*. And if we pray without *Devotion*, we ſhall pray without *Pleaſure*, and be glad when it is over. But, theſe Difficulties, though I mention them as Reaſons againſt *Deſpondency*, on account of the *Coldneſs* of our Devotions, yet they ought to be made Inducements to *Watchfulneſs* and *Induſtry*. While we are *Men*, we ſhall feel the Infirmities of *human Nature*; but, ſtill, we muſt continually *ſtrive* againſt them. While the Duties of our Station require us to be *converſant* with the *World*, we ſhall be *apt* to grow *worldly-minded*, and therefore we ſhould be the more upon our Guard to ſecure our Hearts againſt their Enchantments. *God* is *inviſible*, material Objects are conſtantly preſenting themſelves, and ſoliciting our Affections; for which Reaſons we ſhould be the more aſſiduous to *abſtract* our Thoughts, and *lift* up our Hearts to God. The natural Means of doing this, I have already hinted to you under the Head of *Attention*. If we often *think* of God, his Attributes, and Diſpenſations, theſe Thoughts will tend to kindle pious Diſpoſitions: If we acquire juſt Notions of his Perfections, we ſhall

praiſe

praiſe him with ſuitable Diſpoſitions: A juſt Senſe of his *Goodneſs* will infuſe Gratitude and Joy into our *Thankſgivings*: If we apprehend what miſerable Creatures we ſhould all be without the Continuance of his *Bounty* and *Mercy*, this would make us importunate and earneſt in our *Petitions* for temporal and ſpiritual Bleſſings: The Conſciouſneſs of our own Vileneſs, and God's Purity, will make our Confeſſions ſorrowful and humble. This is the *natural* Way of acquiring *Fervency* and *Devotion* in our Prayers.

I can think of nothing, in the *natural* Way, more likely to make a Perſon *pious* and *devout*, than Mr. *Harvey*'s *Meditations*, eſpecially thoſe upon the *Tombs* and the *Starry Heavens*, which are extremely *ſolemn*, yet adorn'd with ſuch a Variety of beautiful Images, and enlivened with ſo much Ingenuity, that they are as *entertaining*, as they are *affecting*. I thankfully congratulate this very worthy Gentleman upon the Credit and Pleaſure of having done ſo much Good, and being likely to do a great deal more.

But theſe *natural* Means *alone* will not do; God's Grace is neceſſary to aſſiſt our Endeavours; and, therefore, in all our *Prayers*, whether publick or private, we muſt firſt look up to God, and beg him to give us his Holy Spirit, to compoſe our Minds, to fix our Thoughts, and raiſe our Affections; which is the more needful by reaſon of the Artifices of our grand Deceiver, who, as he is watchful to obſtruct all good Actions and Diſpoſitions, ſo he will be more

particularly induſtrious to hinder the Succeſs of our Devotions, which are ſo acceptable to God, and ſo great a Means of Grace and Improvement. Againſt this ſtrong Hold he will be ſure to plant all his Batteries, and employ all his Stratagems; and, therefore, beſides our utmoſt Vigilance and Endeavours to ſecure our Minds againſt his Suggeſtions, we muſt always, before we enter upon the Duty, moſt humbly and heartily implore the divine Aſſiſtance; and whenever we find our Thoughts wandering, and our Hearts growing cold and lifeleſs, we ſhould immediately, in a ſhort Ejaculation, apply ourſelves to him who only can enable us to reſiſt the Devil, that he may flee from us.

What I have ſaid concerning *Attention* and *Fervency*, is equally applicable to *private* and *publick* Prayer, and is the Worſhip only of the *Mind*; but we muſt worſhip God with our *Bodies* alſo, that we may pay him the Devotion of our *whole Natures*. God has a Right to the Worſhip of our *Minds*, becauſe he created them; and St. *Paul* commands us to *glorify him with our Bodies*, becauſe *he bought them with a Price*, the Price of his *Blood*. I ſhall conſider *bodily* Worſhip, as it relates to *publick* and *private* Prayer.

Firſt, As it relates to *publick* Prayer.

Now the Deſign of *bodily* Worſhip in a *Congregation*, being to expreſs to *others* the *inward* Worſhip of the *Mind*, we muſt do it by ſuch *outward* Tokens as by *Nature* and *Cuſtom* are the common Significations of it. I ſay *Nature* and *Cuſtom*;

Cuſtom; for, *ſome* external Expreſſions of our *inward* Sentiments and Affections, are as *unalterable* as our *Natures*, while others are of *arbitrary* Inſtitution by an *Agreement* amongſt ourſelves. All *external* Expreſſions of our Thoughts may be brought under the three following Heads, our *Looks*, our *Voices*, and our *Geſtures*. The two firſt are the *unalterable* Language of *Nature*, the laſt, of *human Inſtitution* by *Agreement*. In *all* of them we muſt expreſs the Sentiments and Diſpoſitions of the *Mind*, in the ſame Manner at our *Devotions*, as we expreſs them at *other* Times, or elſe we do not *manifeſt* them to *others*, which is the Intention of *external* Worſhip. By this *unerring* Rule let us examine our Behaviour at our *publick* Devotions.

Firſt, as to our *Looks*. Dr. *Watts* has expreſſed himſelf ſo pertinently and handſomely upon this Point, that I will not undertake to expreſs myſelf better, and therefore I ſhall give the Reader the Paſſage in the Doctor's own Words, Page 80. " In the *Face* the *God of Nature* has " written various Indications of the Temper of " the *Mind*, and eſpecially when it is moved by " any warm Affection. In divine Worſhip the " whole Viſage ſhould be compoſed to Gravity " and Solemnity, to expreſs a holy Awe and " Reverence of the divine Majeſty of God, and " the high Importance of the Work wherein " we are engag'd. In *Confeſſion of Sin*, while " we expreſs the Sorrows of our Soul, Melan- " choly will appear in our Countenances; the " Dejection of the Mind may be read there, and,

" according

" according to the Language of Scripture, *Shame*
" *and Confuſion will cover our Faces.* The hum-
" ble Sinner *bluſhes* before God at the Remem-
" brance of his Guilt, *Jer.* li. 51. *Ezra* ix. 6.
" Fervency in our Petitions, and holy Joy when
" we give Thanks to God for his Mercies, and
" rejoice in our higheſt Hope, will be diſcovered
" *by very agreeable and pleaſing Traces in the*
" *Features and Countenance.*" This Obſerva-
tion of the pious and ingenious Author is ſo true, that where there are *no* Appearances of theſe Paſſions in the *Countenance*, we have no reaſon to think that the Paſſions are, at that Time, in the *Mind*; and, the ſtronger the Paſſions, the ſtronger will be thoſe Appearances, which are the natural *Indications*, becauſe they are the natural *Effects*, of them. *Intenſeneſs*, *Earneſtneſs*, and *Anxiety* of Mind for the Succeſs of our Prayers will ſhew themſelves in a *ſteddy Eye*, and *a fixed Compoſure* of the *Features*. Obſerve any Man when he is *intent* upon any difficult Point of Learning, or ſettling an intricate Account, that requires cloſe Application of *Thought*, and you may read his Attention very legibly in his *Looks*. Obſerve another that is going upon ſome Buſineſs of the laſt Conſequence to him, and you may *ſee* that the *Event* engroſſes the whole Man; you may paſs by him, and he will not ſee you; you may ſpeak to him, and he will not hear you; all the Senſes are locked up; *external* Objects can get no Admittance. But let any one go into a *Church*, and take a View of the *Countenances* of the Congregation, will he be

be able to read, in the Generality of them, this Intenſeneſs of Thought, and the proper Paſſions that ought to be excited at our Devotions? Far otherwiſe: You may read the utmoſt *Inattention* and *Unconcernedneſs*. Hypocrites may be able to counterfeit theſe Appearances, and may deceive us, but it is impoſſible that we ſhould be deceived where People do *not* appear to be attentive and devout, becauſe *Nature*, where there is not a forceable Reſtraint put upon it, will ſhew itſelf by theſe outward Signs. True Piety is naturally modeſt, and *will* offer ſome Violence to itſelf, as to the *outward Appearances* of it, leſt the Sincerity of the *Heart* ſhould be ſuſpected. Upon this Head I ſhall be beholden to Dr. *Watts* for another very pertinent Paſſage in the ſame Page. " But here let us take heed " that we do not expoſe ourſelves to the Cen- " ſure of our Saviour, who reproved the *Pha-* " *riſees* for diſfiguring their Faces all that Day " which they ſet apart for ſecret Faſting and " Prayer. While we are engaged in the very " Duty, ſome decent Appearances of the Devo- " tion of the Mind in the Countenance are very " natural and proper; but at the ſame Time it " is beſt that thoſe Diſcoveries, or Characters, " of the Countenance, fall below, and ſtay be- " hind, the inward Affections of the Mind, ra- " ther than riſe too high, or go before. The " Devotion of our Hearts ſhould be warmer and " ſtronger than that of our Faces; and we " ſhould have a care of all irregular and diſa- " greeable *Diſtortions of the Face*, which ſome-

" times

" times may tempt our Fellow-worſhippers " to Diſguſt; as well as, on the other hand, " avoid *Yawning*, and an Air of *Liſtleſſneſs*. " To lift up the Eyes to Heaven is very natu- " tural, and therefore the Pſalmiſt very often " mentions it; though ſometimes, under great " Dejection of Spirit and Concern for Sin, it is " very decent, with the *Publican*, to look " down: But, above all, a *roving Eye* ought to " be avoided in Prayer." Upon this Account he recommends keeping the Eyes cloſed, leſt the Objects that occur to the Sight ſhould divert the Attention of the Mind. This Rule may be of Uſe to ſome; but in *our* Worſhip there is another that may be as uſeful, and that is, looking all the while in the *Common-prayer-book*.

The next *external* Token of the inward Devotion of the Mind is, the *Tone* of the *Voice*; every Paſſion has its peculiar manner of expreſſing itſelf; *Joy*, *Grief*, and *Humility*, have their proper Accident, which may be *imitated*, but cannot be *altered* where the Paſſion is *real*. A true Penitent will confeſs his Sins in a *mournful Tone*: If his Mind be duly affected with the Senſe of his Guilt and Danger, he muſt ſpeak with the *Voice* of Sorrow and Fear; when his Mouth praiſeth God, he will do it, as *David* did, with *joyful* Lips; there will be an Elevation of *Voice*, as well as of the *Soul*. To uſe another Expreſſion of the Pſalmiſt, He will praiſe God *luſtily, and with a good Courage*: The Reaſon why there is ſuch a *Faintneſs* and *Languor* in the Voices of *modern* Congregations is, becauſe they

they are not *inwardly affected*, as they ought to be. They who give an Account of the *primitive Chriſtians* at their publick Devotions, tell us, that their *Reſponſes* were like the Voice of *many Waters*, and their *Amen* like a *Clap of Thunder*. There are two Extreams that ought to be avoided; there is a modeſt Decorum to be preſerved in the *Voice*, as well as in the *Looks*; To be too *noiſy*, much louder than the Congregation, or to ſpeak with an *unnatural* Tone, looks like *Affectation*; not to make the *Reſponſes*, and *repeat* thoſe Parts which the *Congregation* is directed, by the *Rubricks*, to repeat, or to ſpeak ſo low as not to be heard, is not *joining* in the Service; neither, indeed, is their *ſilent* Attenddance *publick* Worſhip: And, if they *do* repeat any Part of the Service with any Degree of *inward Fervency*, it will appear in the *Tone* of the Voice. This is *unavoidable*; it is *Nature*.

Proper *Geſtures* of the Body come next under Conſideration; theſe, in ſome meaſure, depend upon *Cuſtom*; but *Reaſon* directs us to the Uſe of ſuch as are moſt expreſſive of thoſe Diſpoſitions of the Mind, which ought to accompany our Prayers: We muſt be careful not to fall ſhort of thoſe outward Teſtimonies of Reſpect which we ſhew to any of our *Fellow-creatures*;— PROSTRATION, or falling flat upon the Face, before great Perſonages, was the antient Uſage in the Times of the *Patriarchs*, and therefore it was the Poſture which pious People then frequently uſed in their *Worſhip*: But this Poſture not being the Practice of *our* Times when we ap-

proach the Preſence of earthly Princes, and other great Perſons, it is ſufficient for the Purpoſes of *publick Worſhip* if we uſe the *higheſt* Tokens of Reverence that are cuſtomary on *other* Occaſions. *Kneeling* is now the Poſture moſt in uſe, and *Nature* ſeems to have dictated and led Mankind to it, as an Expreſſion of Humility, and a Senſe of our Wants, and Dependence upon the Perſon before whom we kneel: This Poſture has been practiſed in all Ages and Nations, even where the Light of Revelation never ſhined.—But, *ſtanding* is a Poſture not *unfit* for Worſhip, (eſpecially in our *Praiſes* and *Thankſgivings*, and in Places where there is not Conveniency for the humbler Geſture of *Kneeling*) as it is a Token of Eſteem and Honour for any Perſon to ſtand up when we ſpeak to him. Both theſe Poſtures are uſed in *our* publick Worſhip, in different Parts of it; but, as far as our bad Cuſtom of having *Pews* will admit of it, *all* the Congregation ought to Uſe the *ſame* Poſture in *every* Part, in order to make our Worſhip compleatly *joint* Worſhip.—But *ſitting* never was in any Age, or Country, uſed as a Poſture of *Worſhip*, where People's Health and Strength would admit of any other; neither is it admitted in our Churches during any Part of the *Prayers*, but only while the *Leſſons* are read; though the *Indevotion* of many People practiſe it while the *Pſalms* are *ſinging*: I would aſk ſuch People, whether celebrating the *Praiſes* of our *Creator* be not as much an Act of *Adoration* a sany other Part of our Worſhip? and whether they

can

can ſeriouſly think *ſitting* to be a proper Poſture for *Adoration*. In order to convince them of their *irreverent* and *abſurd* Behaviour, I would deſire them to go to Court with a *complimental Addreſs* to his *Majeſty*, and when they come before the *Throne* to take a Chair and ſit down, in a familiar Manner, to deliver it. The Conſequence, I trow, would be, that they would be immediately ordered to withdraw, and not preſume to approach his Preſence any more till they had learn'd more *Manners*. And what is *God* that he ſhould be treated with leſs Ceremony than one of his *own Creatures?* One would hardly think a *civilized* Perſon capable of ſuch *groſs Rudeneſs*, where the higheſt, the moſt awful Reverence is due.—There are others who, when they are upon their *Knees*, will lay their *Bodies* along upon the *Seat*. I would deſire *theſe* careleſs Worſhippers alſo to fanſy themſelves upon their *Knees* before the *King* to beg their Life, or ſome very great Favour, or to return him *Thanks*, would they behave to *him* in ſuch a Manner as they behave to their *Maker and Judge?* Caſes of *Weakneſs* of *Body* are out of the Queſtion. God will have *Mercy* and not *Sacrifice*. But, in ſuch a Caſe, when they find themſelves in Danger of fainting, or being ſick, by *kneeling*, and muſt change their Poſture, if I might adviſe, they ſhould *ſtand* till they can recover themſelves; or if they be not able to bear that Poſture neither, in my Opinion they had better ſit down a while, and as ſoon as they can, fall upon their *Knees* again. My Reaſon is this:

It will ſhew the Congregation that they change their Poſture out of *Neceſſity*; whereas reſting their Bodies upon the Seat in a Poſture of *Eaſe*, looks too much like *Sloth* and *Indolence*. But, whatever the Poſture be, whether *kneeling*, *ſtanding*, or *ſitting*, the Body ſhould be *upright*; not *leaning* and *lolling*, in ſuch a Manner as would be thought *indecent* in company with our *Betters*, or even our *Equals*, if they be *well-bred* Perſons: And therefore, in order to judge of the *Propriety* of our Behaviour at *Church*, we ſhould conſider whether we ſhould think it decent in any other Place where we meant to ſhew *Reſpect*. For what is eſteemed *Ill-manners* towards one another, in any other publick Company, muſt be highly *irreverent* in *publick Worſhip*. I mentioned the Inconveniency of having *Pews* in our Churches, becauſe more People are frequently crouded into them than can poſſibly *kneel*. But another bad Cuſtom is practiſed by ſome Perſons of *Faſhion* (by way of *Diſtinction*, I ſuppoſe) in building their Pews ſo very high, that unleſs they ſtand up, it is impoſſible for the *Congregation* to ſee *what* Poſtures they uſe. This is deſtroying the *very Nature* of *publick* Worſhip, for it cannot be *publick* unleſs it be *viſible*, nor have the intended Effect; beſides that it gives greater Opportunities for *Lazineſs* and *Leaning*. " *The lifting up of the Hands*, ſome-
" times folded together, and ſometimes apart,
" is a very natural Expreſſion of our ſeeking
" Help from God. The Elevation of the *Eyes*
" and *Hands*, is ſo much the Dictate of *Nature*
" in

" in all Acts of Worſhip wherein we addreſs " God, that the Heathens themſelves frequent- " ly practiſed it, as we have an Account in " their ſeveral Writers, as well as we find it " mentioned in *holy Scripture* as the Practice of " the *Saints*." See *Watts*, pag. 82. What the Practice of the *Diſſenters* is, I never had the Opportunity of knowing; but with *us* it is hardly ever uſed, as far as I have obſerved. I have one general Obſervation to make upon *bodily Worſhip* in *publick*, which is this: Our Behaviour ought to be ſuch, that if a *deaf* Perſon were to be carried into a *Church*, not knowing it to be a Place of *Worſhip*, he might immediately tell, by the *Looks* and the *Geſtures* of the Congregation, what they were doing. I ſhall conclude this Part with a few general Remarks that may be of Uſe.

I obſerved that People are not to ſpeak *aloud* ſuch Parts of the Service as the Rubricks direct the Congregation to repeat; but there are *ſome* Parts that are improper to be repeated at all by the *Congregation*, either *aloud* or *ſoftly*. As for Inſtance, the *Commandaments* and the *Abſolution*, becauſe they are ſpoken by the *Miniſter* in the Name of *God* to the *People*, and therefore very improper to be ſpoken by the *People* to *themſelves*. But, at the *Concluſion*, they are to ſay *Amen*, i. e. *ſo be it*. There is the ſame Abſurdity in the *People's* repeating after the *Miniſter* the *Benediction*, becauſe he *directs* it, in the Name, and by the Authority of *God*, to *them* So likewiſe it is as to thoſe Words which the

Minister pronounces when he consecrates the Elements at the SACRAMENTS, when he *christens* a Person, and delivers the Bread and Wine at the Lord's Supper. These are such Acts as suppose a *particular Commission*, in the Person who pronounces them, so to do, and therefore not to be repeated by the People who have *no* such Commission.

Another Practice I have observed in some, which tho' it be not such an *Absurdity* as the other, is an *Impropriety*, as it is a Disturbance to others who are within hearing; I mean, repeating *aloud*, after the Minister, or together *with* him, the Collects, and such other Parts as the Congregation is *not* directed so to repeat. This, unless it were done by the *whole* Congregation, cannot but occasion some Confusion, and interrupt the Attention of all that hear them.

But what I would most particularly recommend is, the coming to Church before the Service is begun. It is a common Fault in *most*, nay *all* the Congregations that I have ever yet seen, to come *after*, especially in a *Morning*; insomuch, that let the Hour of Prayer be what it will, there is seldom above half of the Congregation present at the *Beginning*, but they are dropping in during the greatest Part of the Service. This is a most monstrous Practice, both in respect to the *Persons themselves*, and the rest of the *Congregation*. In respect to the *Persons themselves*, it makes a great Defect in their Prayers, as they lose so much of the Service, and the *most material* Part of all, the *Confession*. What

Part

Part of our Prayers can be of ſo much Conſequence, as that which is neceſſary to the Succeſs of all the reſt? How can we expect that our Praiſes, our Thankſgivings, and Petitions, ſhould be acceptable to God, till we have made our Peace with him by *confeſſing our Sins*, aſking Pardon for them, and promiſing Amendment? So much *Wiſdom* did the Compilers of the Liturgy ſhew in making that the *Beginning* of our Prayers; and ſo much *Folly* do they ſhew, who loſe the Benefit of it by not coming in time. In reſpect to the *reſt* of the Congregation, it is a very great *Indecency* and *Diſturbance*, interrupts their Attention, and hinders their Devotion. To come into an Aſſembly while they are all engaged in any *temporal* Buſineſs of Importance, would be juſtly reckoned a very rude and impertinent Diſturbance; but, to interrupt the Buſineſs of our Homage to our God, is a very great Affront to the Deity whom we are worſhipping, and a great Piece of ill Manners, and Offence to the whole Congregation; and the more ſo, becauſe they have not Patience to wait at the Door for the moſt favourable Opportunity of going into their Pew, and will not be content to take their Seat in order as they come, but oblige People to riſe from their Knees, perhaps in the midſt of the moſt ſolemn Part of their Devotions, that they may get to their Place of *Precedency*. But how abſurd is it for People to affect *Superiority* when they are met together in a Capacity that puts us all upon a *Level*? Not to ſhew their *Breed-*

ing but *Devotion*. And how ſhocking muſt it be to a pious Soul, to be thus interrupted in its Converſation with its Maker upon Matters of the laſt Importance! Only imagine yourſelf going in ſuch a Manner to join with your Fellow-ſubjects in an humble Petition for the Pardon of ſome capital Crime, or the Continuance of certain Privileges upon which the Happineſs of your whole Life depends, and then judge whether you would think it *prudent* to go after Part of the Petition was read, or *decent* to interrupt the Buſineſs by the Noiſe that you muſt make by going in; and to oblige others to riſe from their Knees that you might get nearer to the Throne. I cannot ſay any thing more convincing and affecting; I wiſh I could.

I muſt ſay ſomething concerning the right Manner of performing *private* Worſhip, and I have done.

1. What has been ſaid concerning *Attention* at our Prayers, reſpects the *Cloſet* and the *Church* equally alike, the *Nature* of the Duty being the ſame in both Places, and the Attention of the Mind being neceſſary to make it *ſpeaking* to God, or *converſing* with him. For, if we have been ever ſo long upon our Knees in our *Cloſet*, and repeated ever ſo many Words with our *Mouths*, unleſs our *Hearts* at the ſame Time were directed to God, we did not *pray*, becauſe *Prayer* is an Act of the SOUL *ſpeaking* its Thoughts to God.

2. So, likewiſe, *Fervency* in Prayer belongs equally to *private* and *publick* Prayer. The

Object

Object of our Prayers, and the *ſubject Matter* of them, being the ſame in the *Cloſet* and at *Church*, the ſame Affections and Diſpoſitions ought to accompany our Prayers in both Places. We ſhould magnify God's Perfections with the ſame awful Admiration; confeſs our Sins with the ſame Humility and Sorrow; beg God's Mercies and Bleſſings with the ſame Earneſtneſs; acknowledge thoſe which we have received, with the ſame Gratitude and Joy; and intercede for our Brethren with the ſame Affection in our *private*, as in our *publick* Prayers.

3. As to the Uſe of the *Voice* in *private* Prayer, I have but one Direction to give about it, and that is, that we take care that nobody *hears* us pray in our Cloſet, which would deſtroy the *Nature* and *Ends* of *Privacy* in our Prayers, and is contrary to the Command for praying in *ſecret*; for we might as well leave the Door of our Cloſet open, and let Men *ſee* us pray, as let them *hear* us. But the Point of *Privacy* or *Secrecy*, being ſecured, perhaps, with many Perſons, *ſpeaking* the Words may be a Means of fixing the Attention, and increaſing their Fervency.

4. Again, fourthly, *Reverence* of *Behaviour* in Prayer reſpects the *Cloſet* as much as the *Church*. God has a Right to the Homage of the *whole* Man in *both* Places, and *bodily Geſtures* have, alike in both Places, a natural Tendency to improve thoſe Conceptions which we ought to have of God, and thoſe Affections which we ought to have *towards* him. Let not any there-

fore

fore imagine, that in *private* they may pray as well in their *Chair*, or in their *Beds*, as on their *Knees*, becauſe *Kneeling* being by Cuſtom a Poſture of *Reſpect* and *Humiliation*, the Uſe of it will be a Help to the *Soul* in improving our *inward* Reverence. I do not mean that nobody ought *occaſionally* to lift up their Hearts to God in *any* other Poſture than *kneeling* or *ſtanding*, for good People frequently do it in *all* Poſtures; but we muſt, in our *ſtated* and *ſet* Times of Prayer in our *Cloſet*, uſe *bodily* Reverence, and pray in the moſt *humble* Poſture; and, if we accuſtom ourſelves to a ſlovenly and careleſs Behaviour in our *private* Prayers, we ſhall ſoon find our *inward* Reverence for God begin to decay. The Affections of the Mind are wonderfully raiſed and enlarged by the Motions of the Body, and bodily Geſtures avail much in blowing up the Fervour of our Spirits into a holy Flame. Now, in our *Cloſets*, where we are concealed from outward Obſervation, we may uſe ſuch Geſtures as will be the moſt affecting, without giving Encouragement to our own Vanity and Oſtentation, or the leaſt Suſpicion of our Sincerity to others, by the *Singularity* of our Behaviour. Dr. *Watts*, ſpeaking of that Act of Worſhip which we exerciſe *before*, and *after Meals*, is of Opinion that we need not riſe from our Seat when we perform it *alone*. I muſt differ from this ſenſible and pious Writer, becauſe theſe are not *occaſional Ejaculations*, but *ſet* and *ſtated* Acts of Worſhip, and ought to be performed with more Reverence, as well as any other

other *ſtated* Act of *private* Prayer. Thus, by God's Help, I have finiſhed (as well as my Ability and Condition would permit) a Diſcourſe upon the moſt ſolemn and ſeaſonable Subject of Prayer; May God's Grace make it uſeful. *Amen.*

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

SACRAMENT of the *Lord's-Supper*.

NOtwithſtanding the great Number of Books upon this plain Inſtitution, and many of them written by very learned and able Men, I muſt be of Opinion that there is ſtill Room to add ſomething that may be of Uſe; however, if the Reader ſhould be diſappointed he ſhall loſe but little time; for, every thing that is neceſſary for *Chriſtians in general* to know concerning this Matter may be brought into a very narrow Compaſs. It is a common Excuſe, with Perſons of no Education, that they never had any *Learning*, and are not able to *qualify* themſelves for the Sacrament; but, what a blaſphemous Notion do theſe People entertain of God, by ſuppoſing him to have inſtituted an Ordinance for the Uſe of *all Chriſtians*, which, by much, the greateſt Part of them are not capable of *underſtanding*. As I have nothing, at preſent, to do with the *Quakers*, I may venture to take it for granted that our Saviour inſtituted this as an *external* Rite for the Uſe of all his *Followers*, to the *End of the World*. As there is nothing in the Words of the Inſtitution that is *peculiar* to the

the Circumſtances of the *Apoſtles*, but equally applicable to *all* Chriſtians, ſo the *End* and *Deſign* of the Inſtitution concerns *all Chriſt*'s Diſciples; it was to *commemorate* his Death, and this till he ſhould come the ſecond Time in order to *Judgment:* So St. *Paul* expreſsly declares, 1. *Cor.* xi. 26. We have then as *poſitive a Command* for the *univerſal* Obſervance of it, as we have for the Obſervance of any other Precept in the Bible, and conſequently it is of as *univerſal*, and *indiſpenſable Obligation.* What makes any thing a *Duty*, is, its being the *Will* of *God* that we ſhould do it? What makes any thing ſinful is, its being a *Violation* of his Will. *Omitting* to *do* a thing that God has expreſsly *required*, is, in *its Nature*, equally a *Violation of his Will*, and equally a *Sin.* I ſhall probably ſhock ſome of my Readers (as I did once before in my Diſcourſe upon the Duty of *keeping the whole Law*) by aſſerting that a *Chriſtian* can no more juſtify his *deliberately* living in the *habitual* Neglect of this *Sacrament*, than he can juſtify living in the *Habit* of any known Act of *Immorality:* If any one denies this, I aſk him whether *Diſobedience* to God's Commands be not a *Sin*; whether *omitting* to do what God has *abſolutely required*, be not as much an Act of *Diſobedience*, as *doing* what God has *abſolutely forbidden.* Nay it is, in reality, as much an *immoral* Act as *Intemperance*, or *Whoredom*, foraſmuch as it is a Breach of our *Rule* of *Action*, which is the *Will* of *God:* This is undeniably true; and, if it be, it deſerves to be well conſidered by thoſe who are ſo eaſy under the

the *habitual Neglect* of this *positive Command*. This is a short Answer to all the Objections that ever *were* made, or *can* be made against receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper; for, there can be no *reasonable* Excuse for *not* doing a Thing which *is absolutely necessary* to be done; neither can the Danger of receiving it *unworthily* be greater than the Danger of *habitually neglecting* it. The only *rational* Use that can be made of the *Sinfulness*, and *Danger* of being *unworthy* Partakers is, to be careful rightly to inform ourselves concerning the *Nature* of this holy Institution, and the proper Qualifications for a due Reception of it, and not to add to the Number of our Sins, the *damnable* Sin of *habitual Disobedience*. The *Prayers of the Wicked are an Abomination to the Lord*, and People may perform any other Act of *Christian* Worship in a *sinful Manner*, which will be *damnable* unless we repent of it; but who in his Senses would argue, from the Danger of *praying unworthily*, to the Wisdom of *totally neglecting* to *pray*, which would be as *damnable* a Sin as a Man can be guilty of: This would be full as *rational* as it would be for a Man to *kill himself* for *fear of dying*; he *damns himself*, for fear of *being damned*.

2. This Argument will be very much strengthened by considering this *Christian* Rite as successive to the *Jewish Passover*, and comparing them together. The *Passover* was a *Memorial* of the Deliverance of the *Jews* from their *Egyptian Slavery*; it was an Ordinance for the *whole Nation*; an Ordinance *for ever*; so strictly enjoined,

enjoined, that whoever neglected it, *that Soul was to be cut off*, not suffered to enjoy the *Benefits* of the Deliverance. The Sacrament of the *Lord's-Supper*, our *eucharistical Feast*, is an Ordinance in Memory of our Deliverance from *Sin* and *Death*, by the Blood of *Christ*. Now, as the *Passover* was an Institution of *universal, and perpetual Obligation*, the *Christian Rite* which was appointed in the *room* of it, must be as *extensive*, and as *lasting*, in its *Obligation*. As it was instituted in Memory of *much greater Benefits* than the *Passover* commemorated, it cannot be supposed that the Observance of it would be required under the Sanction of a less severe Penalty. If a *Jew* was to be *cut off* for the Neglect of their *Memorial*, can a *Christian* expect to enjoy the Benefits of *Christ's* Death, or not to be punished in the next World, if he refuses to shew his *Gratitude* and *Obedience* to his *Saviour*, by his Attendance upon that holy Solemnity, which was appointed in Memory of it? No. Such a Soul has nothing to expect but to be *cut off* from all the Benefits of *Christ's* Passion, and doomed to *eternal* Death. This Argument is as strong as any Argument can possibly be that is drawn from *Analogy*, i. e. *Parity of Reason*.

3. But this Institution is not a *bare Memorial* of *Christ's* Death, but the *Means* of our partaking of the Benefits which he purchased for us, and on God's Part a visible Pledge to assure us thereof. I shall first collect the Sense of *our Church* concerning this Matter. The 28th *Article* says, "that the *Supper of the Lord* is not only a *Sign*

" of the *Love* that *Chriſtians* ought to have " among themſelves one to another, in Imitation " of *Chriſt*'s Love to us, (ſhewn particularly by " dying for us, and uniting us together in one " *Body*, of which he is the *Head*) but rather it " is a *Sacrament* of our Redemption by *Chriſt*'s " Death; ſo that to ſuch as *rightly*, and with " *Faith*, receive the ſame, the Bread that we " break is the *partaking* of the *Body* of *Chriſt*; " and likewiſe the Cup of Bleſſing which we " bleſs, is the *partaking* of the *Blood* of *Chriſt*." After which, having declared herſelf againſt the *literal* Senſe of the Words of the Inſtitution, ſhe goes on in the Article to declare that the *Body* and *Blood* of *Chriſt* are *given*, *taken*, and *eaten* after a ſpiritual Manner; and that the *Mean* whereby the Body of *Chriſt* is received, is *Faith*. Which laſt Words exclude wicked Perſons from *partaking* of the Body and Blood of *Chriſt*, though they receive the *Elements*. In her *Catechiſm*, having inſtructed her Catecumens that there are two Things in each of the Sacraments, that is, the *outward viſible Sign*, and the *inward* and *ſpiritual Grace* and *Favour*, ſhe teaches them that the *outward* Part of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is *Bread* and *Wine*, but the *inward Part*, or Thing ſignified, is the *Body* and *Blood* of *Chriſt*, which are *verily* and *indeed* taken and received by the *Faithful*. In the firſt *Homily* concerning this *Sacrament*, ſhe declares herſelf after the ſame Manner; " Thus much we muſt be ſure to hold, " that in the Supper of the Lord there is no " *vain*

" *vain Ceremony*, no *bare Sign*, no *untrue Fi-*
" *gure* of any Thing *abſent*, but the *Table* of
" the *Lord*, the *Bread* and *Cup* of the *Lord*;
" the *Mercies* of *Chriſt*; the *Annunciation* of
" his Death; yea the *Communion* of the *Body*
" and *Blood* of the *Lord*, in a marvellous *In-*
" *corporation*, which, by the Operation of the
" Holy Ghoſt, is, through Faith, wrought in
" our Souls." Thus the partaking of the *out-*
ward and *viſible Signs* of the *Body* and *Blood* of *Chriſt*, are appointed, by God, as the *Means* (when received with *Faith*) of partaking of all the Benefits of *Chriſt's Death*, repreſented by the *Bread* and *Wine*. So that nothing can be clearer than that, according to the Doctrine of the *Church* of *England*, no *Chriſtian* can be a *Partaker* of the *Body* and *Blood* of *Chriſt*, that is, the *Benefits* of his *Death*, without partaking of thoſe *outward Signs* which *Chriſt* ordained as the *ſtanding Means* of *conveying* them. She aſſerts, likewiſe, in her *Catechiſm*, that, by being appointed as a *Means*, it is made a *public Pledge*, or *Aſſurance*, that if we rightly partake of this *divine* Inſtitution we ſhall certainly partake of all thoſe *Advantages* which the *Body* and *Blood* of Chriſt purchaſed for us upon the Croſs. This is plainly implied in the Nature of the Thing. Agreeably to *God's own Ordinance* we *publickly plead* the Benefits of *Chriſt's* Paſſion; we *hold forth* a *Repreſentation* of his Death to *God*, as well as to the *People*; thereby *laying Claim* to the *Benefits* of it. And, therefore, if we refuſe thus to *plead*, or *claim*, the Benefits of his Paſ-

ſion, by attending that *Repreſentation* of it which he himſelf appointed for that Purpoſe, we, in effect, *give them up.*

I ſhall now ſhew the Senſe of St. *Paul* concerning the *Nature* and *Effects* of this holy Inſtitution, as we find it ſet forth in the 10th Chapter of his *firſt* Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, and explained by the juſtly celebrated Mr. *Locke*. Though we have many other learned and judicious *Commentators*, I chuſe the Authority of his Opinion, becauſe he never was ſuſpected of any *Partiality* in Favour of *divine Ordinances.*

Ver. 16. The Cup of Bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?

They who drink of the Cup of Bleſſing which we bleſs in the *Lord's Supper*, do they not thereby *partake* of the *Benefits* of *Chriſt's Blood* ſhed for them upon the Croſs, which they here *ſymbolically* drink? And they who eat of the Bread broken there, do they not *partake* in the *Sacrifice* of the Body of Chriſt, and profeſs to be Members of him?

18. Behold Iſrael after the Fleſh, are not they who eat of the Sacrifices Partakers of the Altar?

See how it is among the *Jews*; are not they who eat of the Sacrifice *Partakers* of God's Table the Altar, have *Fellowſhip* with him, and *ſhare* in the Benefits of the

the Sacrifice as if it were offered for them?

20. The Things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to Devils, and not to God: and I would not that you ſhould have Fellowſhip with Devils.

The Things which the *Gentiles* ſacrifice they ſacrifice to *Devils*, and not to *God*; and I would not that you ſhould have *Fellowſhip*, and be in *League* with Devils, as they who by eating of the Things offered to them, enter into *Covenant*, *Alliance*, and *Friendſhip* with them.

21. Ye cannot drink the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils; ye cannot be Partakers of the Lord's Table, and the Table of Devils.

You cannot eat and drink with God as *Friends* at his Table, and entertain *Familiarity* and *Friendſhip* with Devils, by eating with them, and partaking of the Sacrifices offered to them.

Now if Mr. *Locke* thought eating of the Sacrifices offered up to *Devils* to be a Declaration of their being in *League*, or in *Covenant* with them, he muſt think that *eating* the Bread and Wine at the *Lord's Table* is a *Fœderal*, or *Covenant* Act alſo; and, conſequently, it was this great Man's Opinion, that the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is more than a *bare Memorial*, or *calling Chriſt's Death to mind*, by the outward Signs of Bread and Wine. But St. *Luke* and St. *Paul*, when they cite the Words of the Inſtitution, inſtead of ſaying, with St. *Matthew*

and St. *Mark*, This is *my Blood*, expreſſly ſtile the Bread and Wine the *New Teſtament*, or *Covenant:* So does the *Conſecration* Prayer in the Communion Service. And in the Collect immediately following, the Church plainly ſuppoſes, that in this Act of Communion with *Chriſt*, as we do in our *Baptiſmal Covenant*, we *dedicate ourſelves, our Souls, and Bodies to his Service.* And a very comfortable Thing it is to all ſerious Perſons, conſcious of their daily Lapſes, whereby they forfeit their Title to Pardon, and all the other Benefits of the *Chriſtian* Covenant, which God made with us at our *Baptiſm*, to have the Opportunity of *renewing* it, and being *reſtored* to God's Favour, by thus *fœderally* partaking of his *Body* and *Blood.*

The next thing to be conſidered is, the *Frequency* of receiving this Sacrament. In the Words of the Inſtitution there is nothing that either *expreſſes*, or *implies* it. It only ſays, *as often*, &c. which only proves that it is not like the Sacrament of *Baptiſm*, but an Inſtitution to be *repeated.* If this Point could not be cleared up any other Way, it might be done to Satisfaction by the Practice of the *Apoſtles* and *firſt Chriſtians*, who could not be ignorant of the Intention of our Saviour. Were we in any doubt about the meaning of any old Act of Parliament, and the Intention of the Legiſlature in enacting it, if we had any authentic Hiſtory of the Senſe of the Judges, and moſt eminent Lawyers, and the Practice of the Nation immediately after it was enacted; I preſume every reaſonable Man would think

think this Evidence ſatisfactory. Now, we have the moſt authentic Hiſtory of the Senſe and Practice of the *Apoſtles* and *primitive* Chriſtians, immediately after the Inſtitution of the Sacrament, and they received it, at firſt, every Time they met together for publick Worſhip. Time has not *at all* altered the *Nature* of the Inſtitution. The only Alteration is in *Chriſtians*, who have not ſo much *Piety* as they then had. But there is in the *Nature*, and *Ends*, of it ſufficient Proof that it ought *frequently* to be repeated.—As it is a *fœderal* Rite, whereby we *renew* our *baptiſmal* Covenant, which we are ſo frequently breaking, and *recover* the Privileges which we are ſo frequently *forfeiting* by theſe Breaches; this ſhews, not only the *Expediency*, but the *abſolute Neceſſity*, of a *frequent Renewal* of our broken Covenant.—As it is, on *God's* Part, a *publick Pledge*, or *Aſſurance*, that if we *rightly*, and *with Faith*, *partake* of the *Repreſentatives* of *Chriſt's Body* and *Blood*, we thereby *partake* of all the Benefits of his *Paſſion*, Can this be done *too often?* Can a diſconſolate Sinner *too often* ſee this *Token* of his *Pardon?* Can a *weak* Creature *too often* ſee this *viſible Aſſurance* of *ſpiritual Strength?* Can he *too often* uſe this *great Means* of obtaining it? For, if by receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we *partake* of all the Benefits purchaſed by his *Blood*, one of which is the Aſſiſtance of his *Spirit*, this Act *muſt* be, in a more *particular* Manner than any other *can* be, a *Means of Grace*.—To entertain a Perſon at

our *Table*, and to entertain him *handſomely*, is an Act of *Familiarity* and *Friendſhip*. When we receive the Sacrament of CHRIST, our *deareſt Friend*, our *greateſt Benefactor*, entertains us at *his Table*, and entertains us in the *kindeſt* and *nobleſt* Manner that can be conceived. Lord Jeſu! How can I *expreſs*, what I cannot *conceive!* Yes, Lord, I can expreſs this *aſtoniſhing*, and *inconceivable* Inſtance of thy Love in thine own Words, *He that eateth the Bread, and drinketh the Wine at my Table in Remembrance of me, eateth and drinketh my Body and Blood:* And can we *too often* do ourſelves this high Honour? Can we *too often* partake of this reviving, this heavenly *Food?*

But many People will acknowledge the great Comfort and Advantages of receiving the Sacrament *worthily*, but they dread the Danger of receiving it *unworthily*. This is a Point that deſerves a particular Conſideration, but it is a Point that may eaſily be ſettled; ſo eaſily, that it may juſtly be thought ſtrange that ſo many People of common Senſe ſhould miſtake it. But before I enter upon this Head I muſt remind the Reader of one thing that I have already proved, which is this; that let the Danger be ever ſo great, it is impoſſible that it ſhould be greater than the Danger of living in the wilful Neglect of it. Receiving *unworthily* may relate to the *Manner* of receiving, or to the *Unfitneſs* to receive it.

Some Expreſſions of St. *Paul*, unhappily inſerted in one of the *Exhortations* in the *Communion*

nion Service, without a ſufficient Explanation, has occaſioned great *Errors* and *Scruples* in the Minds of many well meaning People; and, therefore, I ſhall cite the *Texts*, and be farther beholden to Mr. *Locke*, for his *Comment* upon them, it being impoſſible for me, or any Body elſe, to explain them more clearly. I ſhall firſt cite Part of the *Argument*, or *Contents* of this Paſſage, which he has prefixt to his *Comment*. " The " celebrating the Paſſover amongſt the *Jews*, " was plainly the eating of Meat, *diſtinguiſhed* " from other *ordinary* Meals by ſeveral peculiar " Ceremonies; two of theſe Ceremonies were, " eating of Bread ſolemnly broken, and drink- " ing a Cup of Wine, called the *Cup of Bleſ-* " *ſing*: Theſe two our Saviour transferred into " the *Chriſtian* Church, to be uſed in their Aſ- " ſemblies for a Commemoration of his Death " and Sufferings. In celebrating this Inſtitution " of our Saviour, the judaizing Chriſtians fol- " lowed the Jewiſh Cuſtom of eating their Paſs- " over; they eat the *Lord's-Supper* as a Part of " their Meat, bringing their Proviſions into the " *Aſſembly*, where they eat divided into diſtinct " Companies, ſome feaſting to Exceſs, while " others, ill-provided, were in Want. Their eat- " ing thus in their *publick Aſſembly*, and mixing " the *Lord's-Supper* with their *ordinary Meal*, " as a *Part* of it, with other Diſorders and In- " decencies accompanying it, is the Matter of " this Section."

CHAP. xi.

Ver. 20. When ye come together into one Place, this is not to eat the Lord's-Supper.

You come together it is true, in one Place, and there you eat, but yet this makes it not to be the eating of the *Lord's-Supper*.

21. For in eating every one taketh, before other, his own Supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

For in eating you eat not together, but every one taketh his own Supper, one before another. (*a*)

22. What, have ye not Houſes to eat and drink in, or deſpiſe ye the Church of God, and ſhame them that have

Have you not Houſes to eat and drink in at home, for ſatisfying your Hunger and Thirſt? Or have ye a Contempt for the Church of God,

(*a*) Ver. 21. To underſtand this we muſt obſerve,

1. That they had ſometimes Meetings on Purpoſe only for eating the Lord's Supper, Ver. 33.

2. That to theſe Meetings they brought their own Supper, Ver. 21.

3. That tho' every one's Supper was brought into the *common Aſſembly*, yet they did not eat *in common*, for every one fell to his own Supper, *apart*, as ſoon as he and his Supper were there ready for one another, without ſtaying for the reſt of the Company, or Communication with them in eating, Ver. 21, 33.

In this St. *Paul* blames three Things eſpecially;

1*ſt*, That they eat their *ordinary* Food in the *Aſſembly*, or *Church*.

2*dly*, That though they eat in the *common* Meeting-place, yet they eat, *ſeparately*, every one his own Supper, *apart*; ſo that the Plenty and Exceſs of ſome ſhamed the Want and Poverty of others, Ver. 22, 34. Hereby alſo the Diviſions amongſt them were kept up, Ver. 18. they being as ſo many *ſeparated* and *divided* Societies, not as *one* united Body of *Chriſtians* commemorating their *common* Head, as they ſhould have been in celebrating the *Lord's Supper*, Chap. x. xvi. xvii.

3*dly*, That they mixed the *Lord's Supper* with their own, eating it as a *Part* of their *ordinary Meal*, whereby they made not that *Diſcrimination* between it and their *common Food* as they ſhould have done, Ver. 29.

have not? Shall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe you not.

God, and *prophane* it by putting it to *common* Uſes; and take a Pleaſure in putting thoſe out of Countenance, who have not wherewithal to feaſt here as you do: In this I cannot praiſe you.

23. For I have received of the Lord, that which I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus, the ſame Night in which he was betrayed, took Bread.

For what I received, concerning this Inſtitution, from the Lord himſelf, that I delivered unto you, when I was with you; and it was this, *viz.* that the Lord Jeſus in the Night wherein he was betrayed, took Bread, *&c.*

24. And when he had given Thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you: this do in Remembrance of me.

25. After the ſame Manner alſo he took the Cup when he had ſupped, ſaying, This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood: This do ye, as oft as ye ſhall drink it, in Remembrance of me.

26. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye ſhew forth the Lord's Death till he come.

So that the eating of this Bread, and drinking this Wine at the Lord's Supper, is not to ſatisfy Hunger and Thirſt,

Thirſt, but to ſhew forth the Death of our Lord.

27. Wherefore, whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

He who eats this Bread, and drinks this Cup of the Lord in an unworthy Manner, (*b*) not ſuitable to that End, ſhall be guilty of *a Miſuſe* of the Body and Blood of the Lord; that is, of the Elements that repreſent them, and will be liable to the Puniſhment due to ſuch a Miſuſe of the ſacramental Bread and Wine. What that Puniſhment was we ſee at Verſe 30.

28. But let a Man examine himſelf, and ſo

By this Inſtitution therefore let him examine (*c*) himſelf,

(*b*) Our Saviour in the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, tells the Apoſtles that the Bread and Wine were *ſacramentally* his Body and Blood, and that they were to be eaten and drank in Remembrance of him; which was, as St. *Paul* interprets it, Ver. 26. to ſhew forth his Death till his ſecond Coming to Judgment. Whoſoever therefore eat and drank them, ſo as not ſolemnly to ſhew forth his Death, followed not *Chriſt's* Inſtitution, but uſed them *unworthily*. That is, not to the *End* to which they were inſtituted. This makes St. *Paul* tell them, Ver. 20. that their coming together to eat it, *viz.* the *ſacramental* Bread and Wine, as they did, *promiſcuouſly* with their other Food, as a Part of their *common Meal*; and that too, not *altogether* at one Time, and in one Company, though it were in the ſame Place, was not the *right*, not a *worthy*, Manner of eating the Lord's Supper.

(*c*) St. *Paul*, as we have obſerved, tells the *Corinthians*, Ver. 20. that to eat it after the Manner they did, was not to eat the Lord's Supper. He tells them alſo, Ver. 29. that to eat and drink the Elements without a due Regard had to the Lord's Body, (for ſo he calls the *ſacramental* Bread and Wine, as our Saviour did in the Inſtitution) by ſeparating the Bread and Wine, in the *ſacramental*

so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.

himself, and according to that (*d*), let him eat and drink at the Lord's Supper. For

sacramental Use of them, from the *common* Use of them for Hunger and Thirst, was to eat and drink *unworthily*. To remedy their Disorders herein, he sets before them *Christ's* own Institution of this Sacrament, that in it they might see the *Manner* and *End* of its Institution, and that every one might compare his Behaviour at the Lord's Supper, in order to *judge* whether it were suitable to them. In the Account which he gives of the Institution, we may observe, that he *particularly* remarks to them, that the eating and drinking there was no Part of *common* eating and drinking for Hunger and Thirst, but was instituted in a most solemn Manner, *after* they had supped, and for *another End*, *viz.* to be eaten and drank in Remembrance of him; to represent Christ's Body and Blood; or, as St. *Paul* expounds it, to shew forth his Death. They might also observe another Thing in the Institution, *viz.* that this was to be done when they were all, at one Time, united together in one Company. All which put together shews, what the *Examination*, or *Judging*, here recommended, is. For, the Apostle's Design being to reform their Abuses in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, by *that alone* we must understand his Directions about it, if we will suppose that he talk'd pertinently, to this captious and touchy People. And if his Account of the Institution were not the Rule by which they were to examine their Behaviour on this Occasion, and adjust themselves to it, to what Purpose was this Account given? The *Examination*, therefore, proposed, was no other than an Examination whether their *Manner* of eating the Lord's Supper, comported with the Institution, and with the End for which it was instituted; which farther appears to be so by the *Punishments* annexed to their Miscarriages, which were *temporal* ones, in order to prevent their being *condemned* to *eternal* Death in the next World. If the *Unworthiness*, here meant, were any of those Sins which are usually made the Matter of Examination, and for which Men will be punished with infinitely greater *Judgments* than God inflicted upon these disorderly *Corinthians*, it is highly reasonable to suppose, that the Apostle would not have passed over such Sins in Silence.

(*d*) *So* let him eat. That is, let him examine his Carriage by the Institution, and according to that let him eat. This Interpretation may, to an *English* Reader, seem wrong; for these Words, *Let a Man examine himself, and* so *let him eat*, are commonly unperstood in the same Sense with these, *let a Man examine*, and THEN *let him eat*; and, if this were the Sense of the Words, they

29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.

For he who eats and drinks after an unworthy Manner, without a due Respect had to the Lord's Body, in a discriminating (*e*) and purely sacramental Use of the Bread and Wine that represent it, draws a Punishment (*f*) upon himself by so doing.

30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

And hence it is that many among you are weak and sick, and a good Number are gone to their Graves. But

they signified no more but that Examination should *precede*, and Eating *follow*; which I take to be a quite different Thing from the Meaning of the Apostle here, whose Sense the whole Design of the Context shews to be this: *I here set before you the Institution of* CHRIST, by THAT *let a Man examine himself*, AND ACCORDING TO that *let him eat; let him conform the Manner of his eating to* THAT.

(*e*) Not *discriminating*, not putting a *Difference* between the sacramental Bread and Wine (which St. *Paul* with our Saviour calls *Christ's* Body) and other Bread and Wine, in the solemn and separate Use of them. The *Corinthians* eat the Lord's Supper in, and with, their ordinary Supper; whereby it came to be not sufficiently *distinguished* from *common* eating for *bodily Refreshment*, nor from the *Jewish pascal Supper*, and the Bread broken, and the Cup of Blessing used in that; nor did it, in this Way of eating it, in separate Companies, (as it were, in private Families) shew forth the Lord's Death, as it was intended to do, by the Concurrence and Communication of the whole Assembly of *Christians*, jointly united in the partaking of Bread and Wine in a Way *peculiar* to them, with Reference solely to Jesus Christ. This was that which St. *Paul* calls *eating unworthily*, as is evident from this Place

(*f*) *Damnation.* This is taken for *eternal* Damnation, but it appears plainly from Ver. 30, 32, that the *original* Word signifies Punishment of quite another Nature.

31. For if we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged.

But if we would diſcriminate (*g*) ourſelves, that is, by our diſcriminating the Uſe of the Lord's Supper, we ſhould not be judged; that is, puniſhed by God.

32. But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the World.

But being puniſhed by the Lord, we are *corrected* that we may not be puniſhed with the unbelieving World.

Every intelligent Reader muſt be convinced that it is now impoſſible for any *Chriſtian* Communicant to be guilty of the Crime for which the *Corinthians*, to whom St. *Paul* directed his Epiſtle, was puniſhed; and that their Puniſhment was not *Damnation*, in the common Acceptation of the Word, but *Correction*, by inflicting *temporal* Evils, for their *Reformation*; or, at the higheſt, *Death*, by way of Terror to others. And therefore I cannot but wonder that the Compilers of our Liturgy, who were certainly Men of great Learning and Judgment, as well as Piety, ſhould put a wrong Tranſlation of thoſe Paſſages, which they took from St. *Paul*, into the Exhortation, becauſe it muſt needs lead unlearned People into Errors, and diſcourage them from communicating. This is both a natural Conſequence, and a known Fact.

If

(*g*) The Word that we render *judge*, does never bear that Senſe, but always ſignifies to *diſtinguiſh*, or *diſcriminate*; and in this Place it has the ſame Signification, and means the ſame Thing that it does Ver. 29.

If Mr. *Locke*'s, or ſome other ſhort Explanation were printed and diſperſed in Pariſhes, it might do good. In the mean Time it is to be hoped, that the Clergy will not be wanting from the *Pulpit*, and in *private*, rightly to inform their Pariſhioners; though this cannot be ſo effectual as having a little printed Account, that they may read over leiſurely, by themſelves, and weigh it well.

Having ſhewn that we cannot receive the Sacrament *unworthily*, in St. *Paul*'s Senſe of the Word, after the Example of the *Corinthians*, let us enquire into the other Sort of Unworthineſs, which conſiſts in being *unfit* to receive, for want of the *proper Qualifications*. As I did before, in relation to the *Nature*, &c. of the Sacrament, I ſhall give the Senſe of our Church, as we find it plainly delivered in the *Catechiſm*, and in the *Communion Service*. The Catecumen is aſked this Queſtion: *What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?* The Anſwer is, *To examine themſelves whether they repent them truly of their former Sins, ſtedfaſtly purpoſing to lead a New Life, have a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Chriſt, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men.* In the ſhort Exhortation (in the *Communion Service*) immediately preceding the Confeſſion, it ſays, "Ye that do truly and earneſtly "repent you of your Sins, and are in Love and "Charity with your Neighbours, and intend to "lead a new Life, following the Command-"ments of God, and walking from henceforth "in

" in his holy Ways; draw near with Faith, " and take this holy Sacrament to your Com- " fort." Nay, in the other Exhortation, where the terrifying Paſſages are inſerted, there follows immediately a ſufficient Anſwer to them, and ſuch as would effectually make timorous People eaſy, if their Terrors would ſuffer them coolly to attend to it. " Repent you truly for your " Sins paſt; have a lively and ſtedfaſt Faith in " Chriſt our Saviour; amend your Lives, and " be in perfect Charity with all Men; ſo ſhall " ye be *meet* Partakers of thoſe holy Myſteries." All theſe three Paſſages give a right Account of the requiſite Qualifications for a *worthy* Reception of the Sacrament. And now I would deſire any one to inform me what there is in theſe Requiſites that are not as neceſſary Qualifications for our *daily Devotions?* If we *confeſs* our Sins without a ſincere Sorrow for them, ſtedfaſtly purpoſing to lead a new Life, it is *impudent Hypocriſy*. Unleſs we be in *Charity* with all Men, we are not qualified to aſk Forgiveneſs of God; or, if we have the Aſſurance to aſk it, it will be great Folly to expect it. We are commanded to put up all our Petitions in the Name of *Chriſt*; but without ſtedfaſt Faith in his Merits, and a thankful Remembrance of his Death, we have no Right to make Uſe of his Name, or to the Benefits of his Suffering for us: So that if any one be not fit to receive the Sacrament, he is not fit to ſay his *daily Prayers*; and, if ſo, he is not in a *State of Salvation*, whether he does, or does not, come to the Sacrament. If a Perſon

wilfully

wilfully commits a Sin, unleſs he *repents* of it, it will *damn* him, though he *ſtays away* from the Sacrament. I will venture to affirm, that there is not any one Qualification for making us *meet* Partakers of that holy Inſtitution, but what would have been the conſtant Duty of every *Chriſtian*, if there had been no ſuch Inſtitution appointed. *Self-examination* is a *daily* Duty, a Duty abſolutely neceſſary to a *Chriſtian* Life; and therefore, *Heads* of Self-examination ſhould not be printed in *Preparation* Books without a *Caveat* againſt *Miſtakes*. I am ſatisfied, this has led many Perſons to flatter themſelves, that unleſs they come to the Sacrament they are not obliged to perform the irkſome Taſk of looking into themſelves; but, unleſs they do it *daily*, and at ſome ſolemn Times more fully, they cannot be *good Chriſtians*. When this more ſolemn Examination is to be made, no one can preſcribe to another, becauſe it depends upon Leiſure and Opportunity. There cannot be a *more* proper Opportunity than before we receive the Sacrament; but, if we have an Opportunity to receive when we cannot do the other, the Sacrament ought not to be neglected on that Account. Indeed, thoſe *Preparation* Books, for want of a *proper Caution*, have done great Miſchief in another Reſpect; they have induced many well meaning People to think that unleſs they have Time to go through ſuch a Courſe of *private* Meditations, and *Devotions*, they cannot be *qualified*. I have no Inclination to diſcourage the Duties of the Cloſet, which I have elſewhere preſſingly

preſſingly recommended: They are Duties of *themſelves*, without any Regard to the *Sacrament*, and abſolutely neceſſary to a CHRISTIAN *Life*. Where People have Leiſure, and Opportunity, to work up their Minds to as high a Pitch of *Piety* as poſſible, by Meditation and Prayer, before they go to the Altar, it is very right to do it. But, this *actual* Preparation cannot, at all Times, be of *abſolute Neceſſity*. Where People have *not* Leiſure for it an *habitual* Preparation is ſufficient; and, without that *habitual* Preparation, all the *actual* Preparation in the World will ſignify nothing: If they be *habitually* prepared, they are *always* prepared; for the *Sacrament*, as well as for their *daily* Prayers. That this *actual* Preparation is not, at all Times, neceſſary is evident, to Demonſtration, from the Practice of the firſt Chriſtians, who received it every Time they met together for *publick Worſhip*: But I will bring the Argument home to their Conception by an Inſtance. Suppoſe a Perſon upon a ſick Bed ſhould ſend to the *Miniſter*, or *Curate*, to come and give him the Sacrament, and the Miniſter ſhould deſire to be excuſed, becauſe he had not Time to *prepare* himſelf by a Courſe of *private Meditation* and *Devotion*. What would his Pariſhioner think? Now if an *habitual* Preparation be ſufficient to qualify *him*, why not any of his *People*, upon ſuch *ſudden* Occaſions? If not, the unhappy Perſon muſt die without the Comfort of the Sacrament, for, none of the Pariſh could be *qualified* to *communicate* with him: But, if any one, or

two of them, may be *qualified* by Virtue of an *habitual* Preparation, why not every one? None of these People refuse to join in the *daily Service* without *actual* Preparation, or *Warning*, and I dare venture to rest my own Salvation upon it, that whoever is *qualified* to say his *Prayers properly*, is qualified to receive the *Sacrament*; and, that if he be not *properly qualified* for the *latter*, he is not *properly qualified* for the *former*; and, if he be not *qualified* for *either*, we may venture to pronounce that Man, during his *Disqualification*, in a State of *Damnation*.— In Consequence of this mistaken Opinion concerning the Necessity of this *actual* Preparation, many are carried into another Absurdity. They shall be very strict in their *moral* Conduct, and very regular in their Attendance upon *publick*, and *private* Prayer, some Time before they receive the Sacrament, and as soon as that is over, grow very Remiss and Careless. Like *Absolution* among the *Papists*, they think it clears off old Scores, and gives them fresh Credit until the next Return of the Communion: But it is a *constant Uniformity* of Behaviour, an *uninterrupted Endeavour* to live a regular, good Life, and not such *Starts*, and *Fits*, that must qualify us for God's Favour, and the Sacrament. One Person has lately been in a great Hurry of *Business*; another has lately been on Parties of *Pleasure*, which disqualifies them for the Solemnity of the Sacrament. I ask, whether the Business of the former, and the Pleasure of the latter be Innocent in their Nature, and pursued in such a manner

ner as is consistent with that serious and religious Frame of Mind, which ought to be *habitual* to every *Christian*, and does not indispose him for his daily Devotions in his *Closet*. If it does not, neither does it indispose him for any *publick* Act of *Christian* Worship. A Man may engage in *too much* Business, or spend *too much* Time upon his Amusements, or indulge *too long* in them at *any one* Time; but, then, these *Indulgencies* are sinful in their Nature, and as inconsistent with their *daily Prayers*, as with the *Sacrament*. Another has been *ruffled*, and cannot *compose* himself. But he must *endeavour* to do it immediately, or how will he be able to say his Prayers at *Night*? Or, if he should die in the mean Time, what will become of him, for, he will not die in the *necessary* Disposition of a CHRISTIAN? Besides, the Sacrament will be the strongest Motive, and the greatest Help, to Forgiveness. If I have made this Matter clear (and if I have not, it is not in *my* Power to do it) it will enable any Person of an ordinary Understanding to remove all Doubts and Scruples, let them arise from what Cause they will: But, if any uncommon Case should disturb and perplex them, why do they not apply to their *Guides*, or some discreet Friend, for Satisfaction. This they are forward enough to do in their *temporal* Concerns; and, if they refuse to do it in *religious* Matters, of infinitely more Importance, it looks like a determined Resolution not to be set right, for fear Conviction should put them to the Trouble of reforming their Lives, or to the

Pain of Remorſe from perſiſting to Act againſt *Conſcience.*

There are ſo many *Manuals* of Devotion, that I cannot draw up any better than what every one may ſupply himſelf with. I will not take upon me to recommend any one in Preference to the reſt; but, with regard to the *Sacrament*, I cannot help thinking Biſhop *Gibſon*'s to be the moſt Judicious. My Deſign was only to ſtate ſome very material Points clearly, in which I have found, in a long Courſe of Experience, People greatly miſtaken.

Publiſhed by the ſame Author.

I. A Sermon on the Nature and Duty of Benevolence.

II. On the Nature and Duty of living peaceably with all Men.

Both ſold by W. Russell, *at* Horace's *Head, without* Temple-Bar.

III. Three Dialogues on Anger, and Forgiveneſs. *Sold by* W. Owen, *within* Temple-Bar.

IV. A Sermon againſt Popery. *Sold by Deputy* Clark, *at the* Royal Exchange.

To the CLERGY *in, and about* London *and* Weſtminſter.

Reverend Sirs,

BY the Generoſity of a moſt worthy Prelate, *and two* Gentlemen, *I was inabled to print a large Impreſſion of the following Sermons, and to give away great Numbers of them: The* reſt *were ſold at a very low Price, in order to promote the Circulation of them; eſpecially, in, and about, theſe populous Cities, the great Source of Corruption, whoſe poiſonous Streams are carried, by Commerce, and Intercourſe, through all Parts of the Kingdom. I may,* now, *with leſs Vanity, and more Decency, deſire your Recommendation of them to your Pariſhioners. I,* then, *had no other Pretence for this Freedom than the* vaſt *Importance of the Subject, and the* Seaſonableneſs *of the Diſcourſes, the great Decay of* Piety *and* Virtue *ariſing, chiefly, from the infamous Profanation of the* Sunday *among the* Wealthy, *the* Great, *and the* Noble, *whoſe Example has ſpread the Prophaneneſs through the* trading, *and* lower *People. I hope it will not be cenſured as a* vain-glorious Self-commendation, *if I tell you that they have met with an unexpected* Degree *of Approbation from the* Learned *and* Unlearned; *and are thought to be, in ſome tolerable Meaſure, calculated to anſwer the good Intention of them. The great* Backwardneſs *of Mankind to give Attention to Things of this Nature is the grand Motive, with every pious Chriſtian, to* Induſtry, *and* Zeal, *in recommending them; the* Practica-

bleneſs *of doing it with ſome Succeſs I can warrant by my* own Experience. *I have prevailed with many a one to lay out Six-pence, very uſefully to himſelf; and with* others, *to* contribute *towards the Inſtruction, and Improvement, of thoſe who could not afford to buy. What* has *been done, by a Perſon in my* obſcure *Situation,* may *be done, more eaſily and effectually, by Perſons in a more publick Station, and of a more publick Character. Being convinced that this is a moſt excellent Method of doing good, I have, at my own Expence,* given away *a great many ſmall Tracts; but were my Example conſiderable enough to be propoſed to the Imitation of my Brethren in the like Circumſtances with myſelf, I would adviſe them to do it with more Caution than I have uſed; for, my* Zeal *has eaten up my* Diſcretion; *and prompted me to attempt to do* publick Good *to my* private Prejudice, *without a reaſonable Proſpect of a proper Recompence. That you may not ſuſpect that I have any* worldly *View in deſiring you to recommend theſe Diſcourſes, it is highly fit to inform you, that I ſhall have no Share in the Profits of the Sale of them. As they are likely to ſee another Edition, I ſhall take it as a Favour if any one will be at the Trouble of telling me where he ſees any Errors, or Defects. I am,*

Reverend Sirs,

Sept. 26, 1751. Carey-Street, *by* Lincoln's-Inn. *with a moſt affectionate Eſteem, your very humble Servant,*

W. WEBSTER.

GEN. ii. 2, 3.

And on the seventh Day God ended his Work, which he had made: and he rested on the seventh Day from all his Work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh Day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his Work, which God created and made.

AS I purpose to discourse to you concerning what we *Christians* call the *Sunday*, or *Lord*'s Day, I have chosen, for my Text, those Words of *Moses*, wherein he gives an Account of the original Appointment of one Day in seven for *religious* Uses; intending, from thence, to lead you through a short History of its *Institution*, till it terminates in the Appointment of this our *Christian* Sabbath, by the Authority of the *Apostles*, in honour of *Christ's Resurrection*. My main Design is, to instruct you in *what manner* the *Sunday* ought to be observed by us; but, this cannot be done effectually, without giving you a right Notion of the *Nature*, and *End* of the Institution; any more than you could tell how to apply any *Instrument*, properly, without knowing for what *Uses* it was intended, and what it is capable of serving.—To encourage

you to give me the more patient Attention, I promiſe not to amuſe you with *doubtful* and *needleſs* Points of *Curioſity*, which have been uſually introduced into this Subject; but only to lay before you ſuch uſeful Matters as are plainly and expreſsly told Us in the *Bible*, or are obvious to *Common Senſe*.—— Before I enter upon the *Hiſtorical* Part, by Way of *Introduction*, I ſhall make two Remarks.

1. As we are manifeſtly intended for *Religious* Creatures, it is impoſſible that this Intention ſhould be anſwer'd, unleſs Men employ *ſome* Part of their Time on *Religious Subjects*, and in *Religious Offices*; but, *Experience* ſhews, that if Mankind were left at Liberty, *when*, and how *often*, they would perform theſe Duties, the Duties would not be perform'd at all by the *Generality*. This, I think, may convince any impartial Perſon, that there is all imaginable Reaſon to believe that God *did* appoint an Inſtitution for this Purpoſe from the *Beginning* of the World. This, I ſay, would appear highly probable, from the *Nature* and *Reaſon* of the Thing, were the Scriptures ſilent about it.

2. It is, likewiſe, equally reaſonable to ſuppoſe that God ſhould have taken ſome Method to preſerve the *Memory* of the *Creation*, in order to preſerve the Knowledge and Worſhip of Himſelf, the *Creator*. Now, what Method could ſo effectually have anſwered this Purpoſe, as the Appointment of one Day in ſeven for Men to reſt from their daily Labours, that they

they might be at Leiſure to worſhip *God*, and attend upon the Buſineſs of *Religion*, as *God* had reſted from *his* Work of Creation? Theſe Conſiderations ſhew the *Credibility* of the Account, which *Moſes* gives us in the Words of my Text, of a *ſeventh Day*'s Reſt; and is a full Anſwer to the Conceit of ſome Learned Men, who thought that, tho' it be mentioned here *immediately after* the Account of the Creation, and cloſely connected with it, yet the *Sabbath* was not actually inſtituted till above Two Thouſand Years after. It is ſomewhat ſtrange, that Men of Abilities ſhould entertain ſuch an abſurd Opinion. For, beſides that it ſuppoſes a moſt judicious and correct Writer to write after the moſt unnatural and inaccurate Manner; it is *morally impoſſible* that the Thing ſhould be true. If it be, then the infinitely wiſe God ſuffered the World, for ſo long a Time, to be without an Inſtitution highly expedient in itſelf, and as well fitted to anſwer the Purpoſes intended by it from the *Beginning* of the World, as ever it would be *afterwards*.—For theſe Reaſons *Moſes* muſt be underſtood in the plain and obvious Senſe of the Words, when he tells us,

" That on the ſeventh Day God ended his " Work *which* He had made, and reſted from " all his Work that He had made; that God " bleſſed the ſeventh Day, and ſanctified it, " becauſe that in it He had reſted from all " his Work *which* God created and made."

The former Chapter tells us the *Order* and *Manner* of the Creation of the World, which was finiſhed in *ſix* Days; and my Text tells us, that God, having thus finiſhed the Heavens, and the Earth, and all the Hoſt of them, He *bleſſed* the ſeventh Day, and *ſanctified* it, *becauſe* that in it He had *reſted* from all his Work of Creation. — The Reaſon of his bleſſing and ſanctifying the ſeventh Day we have in thoſe Words—becauſe that in it He had *reſted from all his Work*—The *Nature* of that *Bleſſing*, or *Sanctity*, with which God honoured it, above the other ſix Days, conſiſted in its being thus *ſeparated* from the reſt, and *ſet a-part* for the *Worſhip of God*, and for the *Religious Improvement* of *Men*.—That this is the Meaning of thoſe Words is evident from a great Variety of Places in the *Bible*, where we read, of God's *ſanctifying*, that is, *ſetting a-part* PERSONS, and BEASTS, and PLACES, and THINGS, for *his particular* Uſe.—The *Prophets* and *Prieſts* under the Law, and the *Apoſtles* under the Goſpel, were not *taken from among Men* that They might ſpend their Time in *Idleneſs*, but that They might be employed *for Men*, in Things *pertaining unto God*; as have been all their Succeſſors in the *Miniſtry*.—*Beaſts* were not *ſanctified*, or *ſeparated*, that they might not be employed, but that They might be uſed in *Sacrifices*; nor were *Places* and *Things* ſeparated from *common Uſes*, that they might not be uſed at all, but that they might be uſed in the Service of *Religious Worſhip*. In like Manner, the

ſeventh

ſeventh Day was not *bleſſed* that Men might not do any Thing on that Day, but that They might employ it to *Religious* Purpoſes. But, more of this hereafter. Let us now proceed in the *Hiſtory* of the Inſtitution.

From the FIRST Inſtitution of the *Sabbath*, at the *Creation*, to the Deliverance of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, we find no *direct* Mention of it, neither does there appear to have been any neceſſary Occaſion for it; the taking Notice, even of its Obſervation by the People of God, either before, or after the Deluge, was needleſs after it had been ſo expreſsly enjoined in the Beginning. But, after *that* great Deliverance, we find the Sabbath mention'd, together with the *Reaſon* of its being mention'd, in the following Manner.

At the fourteenth Chapter of *Exodus*, Ver. 30. we read, *Thus the Lord ſaved Iſrael* THAT *Day.* If we turn back to the twelfth Chap. Ver. 14. we ſhall find that the Day here mentioned was the *laſt* of the Feaſt of *Unleavened Bread*; which Feaſt laſted *ſeven* Days; the *firſt* and *laſt* of which were kept Holy; the *former*, in Memory of the Deliverance of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*; the *latter*, in Memory of God's overthrowing *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt in the *Red Sea*. Biſhop *Patrick*, upon the Authority of the great Mr. *Mead*, is of Opinion, that this *laſt* Day of the Feaſt of Unleavened Bread was the very Day which was afterwards appointed by *Moſes*, for the *Jewiſh Sabbath*; becauſe, when the *Decalogue* is repeated in the

fifth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, the *Creation* is not mentioned, but the *Redemption* out of *Egypt* is made the Ground of the Deſignation of *that particular* Day, after the preceding ſix Days: Whether the Day, for the Obſervation of a Sabbath, were now *changed* on the Account of that Deliverance, or whether this Day happened to be the *ſeventh* Day that was appointed at the *Creation*, the *greateſt* Man that ever lived could only *conjecture*, there being no *poſitive Proof*; but, if the Argument, here offered, proves any Thing, it proves, that the *firſt* Day of the Feaſt, and not the *laſt*, was the Day, becauſe, as the learned Biſhop himſelf obſerves, upon *this* Day the *Jews* were delivered out of *Egypt*, and were commanded to keep it Holy in *Memory* of that Deliverance.

In the ſixteenth Chapter, we have an Account of God's ſending the *Jews Food from Heaven*, of which every Man was to gather enough for his Subſiſtence, *daily*, for five Days; and on the ſixth Day a *double* Quantity, becauſe God would ſend them none on the ſeventh Day, That being intended for a Day of *Reſt*.

At the twenty-ſecond Verſe, begins the Account of this Inſtitution. "And it came to "paſs on the ſixth Day They gathered twice "as much Bread, two Omers for one Man: "and all the Rulers of the Congregation "came and told *Moſes*. And He ſaid unto "them, This is That which the Lord hath "ſaid, *To-morrow* is the *Reſt* of the *Holy Sabbath* unto the Lord: Bake that which ye

"will

" will bake To-day, and ſeeth that which ye " will ſeeth; and that which remaineth over " lay up for you to be kept until the Morn- " ing. And they laid it up till the Morning, " and it did not ſtink, neither was there any " Worm therein. And *Moſes* ſaid, Eat That " To-day; for To-day is a *Sabbath* unto the " Lord: To-day ye ſhall not find it in the " Field. Six Days ye ſhall gather it, but on " the *ſeventh* Day which is the *Sabbath*, in it " there ſhall be none." And at the thirtieth Verſe we read thus: " So the People *reſted* on " the *ſeventh* Day." From whence we may obſerve, that, tho' *This* was a *particular* Inſtitution, appointed the *Jews* in Memory of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and therefore no Mention is made here of the *Creation* of the World; yet, ſo much of the *Original* Inſtitution, was preſerved as to make it a *ſeventh* Day Sabbath, tho' there were *Circumſtances* added to it, that were adapted to *their particular* Condition*. At this Time, and not before, a Reſt from all Work ſeems to have been appointed. There can be no reaſonable Doubt but that under the *patriarchal* Diſpenſation, all *pious* Perſons did perform religious Offices upon one Day in ſeven, in a manner beyond what was uſual upon the other ſix Days in the

* This Subject ſeems to have been embarraſſed by learned Men, only for want of this plain Diſtinction between the *particular* Inſtitution given to the *Jews* in Memory of their *Deliverance*, and the *general* Inſtitution appointed for *all* Mankind at the *Creation*, and confirmed by *Moſes* at the Publication of the *Law* from Mount *Sinai*.

Week;

Week; but did not ceaſe from *all* kind of Labour until *now*. And this being a *new* Inſtitution (*new*, in reſpect of ceaſing from all Work) it is called in Scripture a *Sign* or *Token*; that is, a Mark of *Diſtinction*, whereby it was known to *what* God they did belong; as the *Heathens* made it known *what* God they worſhipped, by their *religious Rites*. By keeping one Day in ſeven *holy*, we acknowledge ourſelves Servants of that God, who in *ſix* Days created the World, and reſted from his Work on the *Seventh*. By reſting from *all* Work on *That* Day, on which God delivered them from their *Egyptian* Servitude, the *Jews* acknowledged *Him* to be their *Deliverer*; ſo that it was to *them*, a *double* Token, or Sign.

A very little while after this, the *Ten Commandments* were publiſhed from *Mount Sinai*; and *then* the *Sabbath* was ſolemnly ratified, but in Terms *more general*, and applicable to *all* Perſons. In the *former*, the *Jews* were commanded not to *bake*, or *ſeeth* any Thing, to dreſs no Victuals on the Sabbath-day, or to go out of the City where they inhabited. The *latter* being intended for *perpetual* Obligation, to out-live the *Moſaick* Inſtitutions, and to bind *all Mankind* to the End of the World, there is no Mention made of the *particular Prohibitions* given in the *former*. Beſides, if it had not been the Intention of God to make a Diſtinction between the Sabbath which was *purely Jewiſh*, and a Sabbath which was to be *more laſting*, and of *greater Extent*, there ſeems to have

have been no Occaſion at all for the *former Inſtitution*, when the *latter* was to ſucceed it ſo ſoon after.—That the Sabbath, appointed from *Mount Sinai*, *was* intended to be of *perpetual* and *univerſal* Obligation is evident, from its being join'd, and written upon the ſame Tables, with the other Nine Commandments which are allowed to be ſo.—And what ſtill farther confirms it is, the *Reaſon* given for the Inſtitution, which equally concerns all Perſons, in all Places, and in every Age of the World.—Thus we find it at the xxth ch. of *Exod.* ver. 8. "Remember the Sabbath to keep it Holy. "Six Days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy "Work. But the ſeventh Day is the *Sabbath* "of the Lord thy God, *&c.* For in ſix Days "the Lord made Heaven and Earth, *&c.* "*wherefore* the Lord bleſſed the Sabbath-Day "and hallowed it." Now, does not this Reaſon for keeping the Sabbath concern *all the World*, as much as the *Jews?* All the World, therefore, are equally obliged to obſerve it.

Indeed, at the fifth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, Ver. 15. *Moſes* tells the *Jews*, "That they had "been *Servants* in the Land of *Egypt*, and "that the Lord brought them from thence; "and that, *therefore* the Lord commanded "them to keep the *Sabbath-Day*." But, this proves nothing more than that the *Jews* were under a *double* Obligation to keep the Sabbath; as *Men*, in Memory of the *Creation*; as *Jews*, in Memory of their *Redemption* from *Bondage*;

Bondage; even as *we* are under a double Obligation, as *Men*, and as CHRISTIANS.

But, if we proceed, we shall meet with many Occasions of *repeating* the *original* and *general* Institution of the Sabbath, without any Mention of any *particular* Circumstances respecting the *Jews*.

At the xxiiid of *Exod.* we find it repeated, upon the Appointment of a *sabbatical Year*; which sabbatical Year, as well as the *sabbatical* Day, was called a *Sign*, or *Token*.——As God, by an *Angel*, delivered them from the *Egyptians*; and by *Moses*'s Wand drowned the *Egyptians* in the *Red Sea*, when They were in Pursuit of the Fugitives; so, by *Joshua*, he subdued the *Canaanites*, and put the *Israelites* in Possession of their Land; in Memory of which, God ordered that as soon as they came there, and had Rest in their new Possessions (reckoning from their peaceable Settlement) they should observe the seventh Year, and every seventh Year for ever, as a Year of Rest. The Law stood thus, Chap. xxiii. ver. 10, 11. "Six Years shalt thou sow thy Land, and ga-"ther in the Fruits thereof: but the seventh "Year thou shalt let it *rest*, and lie *still*."— With some Variation in the Words it is more largely set forth at the xxvth Chap. of *Leviticus*, v. 2, 3, 4. "Speak unto the Children of "*Israel*, and say unto them, When ye come "into the Land which I give you, then shall "the Land keep a *Sabbath* unto the Lord.— "Six Years thou shalt sow thy Field, and "prune

" prune thy Vineyard, and gather in the Fruit " thereof. But in the *seventh* Year shall be a " *Sabbath of Rest* unto the Land, a Sabbath " for the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy " Field, nor prune thy Vineyard."—This Rest *of the Land* was a Sabbath *for the Lord*—that is, an Acknowledgment of his being the *Proprietor*, in Right of his being the *Conqueror* of the Land; for, as the Psalmist says, It was not *their own Sword*, neither was it *their own Arm*, that got them the Victory over the *Canaanites*, but it was the omnipotent Hand of *God*. Accordingly, God directed to what *Uses* the Products of this Year should be applied; not to the *particular* Use of the *Owners* of the Land, but to *common Uses*; for *all* the People, not excepting the *Servants*, or, even, the *Beasts*; for *all* in *common*, *as* he fed them with Manna in the Wilderness.—But, you will ask, perhaps, How there could be proper and sufficient Food for all the People, and for all the Beasts, when neither the Land was sowed, nor the Trees prun'd? The 5th Verse tells us how. The Fruits of the Earth, That Year, grew *of themselves*, without any Cultivation; as *Commentators* suppose, either from the Seed which casually fell the Year before, or from the old Root which sprouted out again. But to my Apprehension, this is a very unsatisfactory Account, as it is contrary to all Experience of the ordinary Course of Things. Is it not more rational to suppose that, as God forbad them the Use of those

thoſe Means which are, *ordinarily*, neceſſary to make the Fields and the Trees produce their Fruits, if they truſted in his Providence, he would *bleſs* That Year, which was ſanctified to his Honour, with an *extraordinary* Fertility. As the Obſervance of this *ſabbatical Year* of Reſt to the Land was a *Sign*, or *Token*; ſo, likewiſe, was it a *Covenant*, whereby they might be aſſured of his miraculous Bleſſing, if, in Obedience to his Command, they did not plow, or ſow, or prune.

As I had occaſion to mention this *ſabbatical Year*, I was willing to give you an Account of it; but, the Reaſon of my mentioning of it was, its carrying on the Thread of the Scripture Hiſtory of the *Sabbath*.—Leſt the People ſhould imagine that this being a Year of Reſt from all the Labour of *Cultivation*, they were, during that Time, exempted from the Obſervation of the *ſeventh Day*, and might do any Work on *That* Day which they were allowed to do on any other Day of the Week; for this Reaſon, I ſay, immediately after the Appointment of the *ſabbatical Year*, a Repetition of the *ſabbatical Day* is ſubjoined, Ver. 12: "Six Days thou ſhalt do thy Work, and on "the *ſeventh* Day thou ſhalt reſt, that thine "Ox and thine Aſs may reſt, *&c.*"

We find the ſame Caution uſed on another Occaſion, and That was, the Building of the *Tabernacle*. When God had told *Moſes* that he had appointed proper Perſons for the Work, and had given them particular Inſtructions how to

to make it, then the Lord spake unto him the following most solemn Words, which command your most awful Attention.

" Speak thou also unto the Children of " *Israel* saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall " keep: for it is a *Sign* between *me* and *you*, " throughout your Generations; that ye may " know that I am the Lord, that doth sanctify " you. Ye shall keep the *Sabbath*, therefore; " for it is *holy* unto you.—Every one that *de-* " *fileth* it *shall surely be put to Death:* for, who- " soever doth any Work therein, *That Soul* " *shall be cut off from among his People.*—*Six* " Days may Work be done, but in the *se-* " *venth* is the *Sabbath* of *Rest*, holy to the " Lord: whosoever doeth any Work in the " Sabbath-day, he *shall surely be put to Death.*— " Wherefore the Children of *Israel* shall keep " the *Sabbath*, to observe the *Sabbath* through- " out their Generations, for a *perpetual Cove-* " *nant.*—It is a *Sign* between *me* and the " *Children* of *Israel* for ever.—For in *six* Days " (mind the *Reason* which God gives for this " Observation) the Lord made Heaven and " Earth, and on the *seventh* Day he *rested.*" Chap. xxxi. ver. 13, 17.—And in the xxxvth Chap. This Command is repeated again, and some particular Works are specified. Now, the *Reason* of so solemn a Charge on this Occasion is very plain.—As the *Tabernacle* was for *holy* Uses, the People might naturally have thought that any Work on That Day was lawful,

ful, if it were done in *God's immediate Service*. But, God lets them know, that *Obedience* is better than *Sacrifice*; and would not permit them ſo much as to *light a Fire* on That Day, for the Uſe of the *Building*.—So *great a Streſs* does *God* lay upon the Obſervance of *poſitive* Inſtitutions, though *Man* is apt to make ſuch *Trifles* of them.

At the xxiiid of *Lev.* their ſeveral *Feaſts* are enumerated; and, the *Sabbath* being a *Feſtival*, for fear the People ſhould think themſelves at Liberty to do ſuch Works on the *Sabbath*-Day, as were allowable on ſome other *Feſtivals*, here is a Caveat entered againſt doing any Work on That Day.

Thus I have given you a ſhort, but full, Scripture Hiſtory of the *Sabbath*, as it is contained in the Books of *Moſes*.—In which Account you have ſeen that it was *firſt* inſtituted immediately after the *Creation*, in Memory of it; that it was, afterwards, upon the Delivery of the *Jews* from *Egypt*, appointed That People with *additional* Circumſtances *relative* to their *particular* Condition; that, at the ſolemn Publication of the Ten Commandments from Mount *Sinai*, the *general* Inſtitution was confirm'd; that, upon ſeveral Occaſions, this Command was repeated; at the Appointment of the ſabbatical Year, the Building of the Tabernacle, and the Enumeration of their Feaſts. —And from this Hiſtory you may obſerve two Things well worth Notice.

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1*ſt*, The frequent *Repetitions* of this Command. And,

2*dly*, The *Sanction* of it.

Beſides the *preceding* Repetitions, both the *Command* and the *Sanction* are ſeveral times repeated, in the Compaſs of *five* Verſes, in That Quotation which I made from the xxxiſt of *Exod.*—Now God would not have guarded This Inſtitution with ſuch *extraordinary* Care, if the Obſervance of it had not been of the utmoſt Importance, and highly acceptable to Him; nor have annexed ſo ſevere a *Penalty* to the Breach of it, had it not been highly diſpleaſing to Him.—*He ſhall ſurely be put to death.—That Soul ſhall be cut off from among his People.*—Whoſoever was guilty of a *publick* Violation of it, was to be ſtoned to death.—If he did it ſo *ſecretly* that he could not be detected by ſufficient Evidence, it was the generally received Opinion of the *Jews*, that God took the Matter into his own Hand, and inflicted ſome heavy Judgement upon him, in the Courſe of His Providence.—And pray obſerve, that this ſevere Sanction was not annexed to the *particular* Inſtitution, given to the *Jews*, in Memory of their Deliverance from their Servitude in *Egypt*, but to the *general* Inſtitution, appointed at the *Creation*, confirmed from *Mount Sinai*, often *repeated* afterwards, and in *Terms*, and for a *Reaſon*, reſpecting the *whole World.*

We are now come to give an Account of our *Chriſtian* Sabbath, when the Day was

changed from the *ſeventh* to the *firſt* Day of the Week. This is a Subject that has employed the Pens of the Learned, and occaſioned many Books to be written upon it: but I never conſidered any *diſputed* Subject that ſeems to lie in a leſs Compaſs, or to be more obvious to *common Senſe*, without the Aſſiſtance of *Learning*.

From the Hiſtory, which I have given you out of the Old Teſtament, it appears very plainly, that a *Seventh*-day Sabbath was appointed for a *Reaſon*, the Force of which muſt reach *backwards* to the *Beginning*, and *forwards* to the *End* of the World. I ſhall not repeat what I have ſaid, but the Subſtance of it is this: "In *Six* Days God crea- "the World; on the *ſeventh* Day God had "*ended* his Work; and for *This* Reaſon He "*bleſſed* the *ſeventh* Day, and made it *holy*. "This is the Tenour of the *original* Inſtituti- "on at the *Creation*, of the *Republication* of it "from *Mount Sinai*, and of the ſeveral *Repe-* "*titions* of it afterwards." This Inſtitution being thus eſtabliſhed upon a *Reaſon* that muſt hold *univerſally*, it clearly follows that we *Chriſtians* are obliged to obſerve a *Seventh*-day *Sabbath*, in Memory of the *Creation*. The only Queſtion is, whether we be obliged to obſerve the *ſame* Day of the Week which the *Jews* obſerved. If we be, is it becauſe God commanded *them* to keep that Day? If ſo, then you make it a mere *Jewiſh* Inſtitution; and, conſequently, it was nailed to

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the Cross of Christ, and died with Him, as all the other *Mosaical Ordinances* did.—Is it because the *Jewish* Sabbath was upon the very Day of the Week which was appointed at the *Creation?* This is more than any Man, or all the Men in the World can prove. But to cut this Argument short, it has been demonstrated * that the *same* Day would not be the *seventh* Day from the *Creation* in all Parts of the World; and that in *some* Parts the *Sabbath* would fall eighteen Hours later than in *Palestine*. If there be therefore such a thing as a *Demonstration*, this Fact *demonstrates* that it never could be the Intention of God, that the Observance of the *seventh* Day from the *Creation* should be of *perpetual* and *universal* Obligation; though he most certainly intended that the Observance of *one* Day in *seven* should be so.——If therefore, upon the *Abolition* of the *Jewish* Law, *Christians* had no Directions from the *New Testament*, it must have lain in the Breast of *human* Authority to determine it. But then, as the *Jews* had something *particular* appointed them, in honour of their miraculous Deliverance from *Egypt*; so *Christian* Powers, if left to themselves, would naturally have been led to something, in the Appointment of a *Christian* Sabbath, that might preserve the Memory of our Deliverance from a much greater Bondage by Christ.

Having thus prepared the Way, let us see what Light the New Testament affords us.

* *Waggenseil* against *Lipman's Carmen Memoriale*, p. 51.

It is objected, that our Saviour did not, Himself, appoint the *first* Day of the Week for the *Sabbath*. But, how do these Objectors know That? If He did not Himself observe it, it does not, however, follow from thence, that He did not instruct the *Apostles* privately what They should do after his Death.

But They may reply, that, tho' He could not Himself observe this Rite in his Life-time; He might have done it after his *Resurrection*.—To this Objection it is a sufficient Answer to say, that He knew best what was proper to be done. But, tho' He did not observe it Himself, yet if he had not done it before, He might, as far as They knew, *then* order it to be done; and there is abundant Reason to think that he *did*. He was Forty Days upon Earth with them, instructing them concerning the future Settlement of his Church; and it is not at all probable, that in his Instructions He should omit so capital a Thing as the Appointment of a *Christian Sabbath*, in the Room of the *Jewish*; and such a one, as might be a *Sign* or *Token*, between God and Us *Christians*, in the same manner as the *Jewish* Sabbath was a *Sign*, or *Token*, between God and That People.

Some *Christian* Writers in the Warmth of their Zeal, have maintained that our Saviour, after his *Resurrection*, did, in *effect*, tho' not *directly*, appoint the *first* Day of the Week for *our* Sabbath, because He appeared to his Disciples on that Day, when they were assem-

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bled together, for *Christian* Worship.——I must ask their Pardon, if I do not see how these weekly Meetings for publick Worship on that Day should derive their Authority, or how that Day could receive its Sanction, from *Christ's* Appearances among them, when these Meetings on that Day were *prior* to his having appeared there; for we read, that they were assembled together before He came——But, their having made Choice of this Day before He *did* come, this shews plainly that *Christ* had given them Instructions about it before.—This seems to me highly probable, tho' I lay no Stress upon it: But his first Appearance to them being on the first Day of the Week, when they were assembled for *Christian* Worship, seems to be the strongest Testimony of his Approbation of the Institution; as his Approbation gave a strong Sanction to it. It is sufficient for the Purposes of my Point, that the *Apostles*, who must know their Master's Will, and had full Power to determine all Points which He himself had not determined, did observe this Day, as the *Christian Sabbath*; and that all *Christian* People, in all Parts of the World, from the Apostles Days have followed their Example.——It is no Answer to this Argument to say, that in the Acts of the Apostles we meet with no *express Injunction*; for, their *Practice* had the Force of a *Law*, because they had a *Commission* from *Christ*, and by Inspiration from the Holy Ghost were *infallibly* directed in the Execution of it; and

they proved their divine Commiſſion and Inſpiration by *Miracles*. Thus *commiſſioned*, thus *inſpired*, they ſettled this Rite by their conſtant Practice; it was then underſtood to be a *Chriſtian Ordinance*; and what would any Man have more? As *Primate Bramhall* juſtly obſerves, "He that will not be ſatisfied with the "perpetual Tradition of the Univerſal Church, "*i. e.* the whole World of Believers, inclu- "ding the *Apoſtles themſelves*, is utterly inca- "pable of any real Satisfaction."—But, whatever Foundation the *Sunday* may be ſuppoſed to ſtand upon; whether an immediate Appointment by *Chriſt* Himſelf, whether an *Apoſtolical* Inſtitution under his Direction, whether an *Eccleſiaſtical*, or *Civil* Eſtabliſhment; a *Seventh-day Sabbath* ſtands, and *ever muſt* ſtand, irreverſible, immoveable, upon the ſolid Rock of an immediate Appointment by *God Himſelf*, as the *Creator* of the World. If this be admitted (and I may venture to challenge the whole World to confute it) there can be no Room for a rational Debate, whether the *firſt* or the *laſt* Day of the Week, be the fitteſt for a *Chriſtian Sabbath*. ——The Death of *Chriſt* delivered us from the Dominion of Sin, and the Power of the Grave; upon the *firſt* Day of the Week He roſe from the Dead, publickly to teſtify that God had accepted his Death for the Purpoſes of our Redemption. Highly expedient, therefore, is it, that the Memory of this glorious Event ſhould be perpetuated in the Hearts of

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all those who expect a Share in the Benefits of it: and how could that be done more effectually, than by the Appointment of the *Sabbath* upon *that* Day, which assured to the World the *Efficacy* of the Atonement which He made for Us?

We are next to consider how this sacred Institution ought to be observed.

Under this Head I shall consider, FIRST, what we ought *not* to do upon the *Sunday*—SECONDLY, what the Duty of the Day *requires* from us, in order to answer the Purposes of the Institution.

FIRST, Let us consider what we ought *not* to do upon the *Sunday*. And these *Prohibitions* I shall consider under *Three* different Heads.

I. As they are plainly *implied*, tho' not *expressed*, in the *original* Institution of a *Sabbath* at the *Creation*.

II. As they are *expressly* contained in the *Fourth* Commandment, published by *Moses* from *Mount Sinai*.

III. As They are specified in an *Act of Parliament*.

You see, I omit those Prohibitions, which are mentioned in the Institution that was given to the *Jews*, immediately after their Deliverance from *Egypt*, because, *That* was *relative* to their *Deliverance*, and *peculiar* to *Them*.

FIRST then let us consider what *Prohibitions* are *plainly implied*, tho' not *expressed*, in the *original* Institution at the *Creation*.—God instituted a *Sabbath*, i. e. a Day of *Rest*; in

Memory, and in *Imitation*, of his having been employed *ſix* Days, and reſting from the Work of *Creating* on the *ſeventh*. But how is the Deſign of this Inſtitution anſwered, if on the *ſeventh* Day Men follow the common Buſineſs, and ordinary Affairs of Life? This Day is *ſanctified*, *diſtinguiſhed* from the other ſix Days, and *ſet apart* for *pious* and *religious* Uſes; but, if we ſpend this Day in the Purſuit of *ſecular Affairs*, or our *uſual Recreations*, it is not employed for the Purpoſes intended by God. Now, does this Inſtitution concern *all Mankind*, or only *Maſters* and *Miſtreſſes?* Surely *all Mankind*. Therefore it was intended for a Day of Reſt, and Religious Uſes, for *Servants*, alſo: The Conſequence of which Reſt to *Men*, muſt be Reſt to *Beaſts* too.

SECONDLY, I ſhall conſider theſe Prohibitions as they are contained in the Fourth Commandment. It is agreed by all Writers, that there were ſome Prohibitions that concerned the *Jews* ONLY; ſuch as dreſſing no Meat; making no Fires for any other Uſes than warming themſelves in cold Weather; not going out of their Places, *i. e.* not farther than the Suburbs of the City where they dwelt, *&c.* Thoſe *we* have nothing to do with. As to the Fourth Commandment, delivered from the *Mount*, though it was given to the *Jews*, it was not intended for a Law *peculiar* to that People; becauſe, as I obſerved to you before, the *Reaſon* aſſigned for it, reſpects *all Mankind equally*, as the other Nine Com-

Commandments do. The Obligation muſt be as *extenſive* as the *Reaſon* upon which the Law is grounded. The *Reaſon* ſtill ſubſiſts in its full Force; conſequently the *Obligation* muſt continue: The *Reaſon* is *unlimited*; conſequently the *Obligation* muſt be univerſal, wherever the Law is ſufficiently promulged. In this Caſe a *formal Confirmation* of it was not neceſſary, in order to make it obligatory upon Us *Chriſtians*; it is enough that our Saviour did not *formally repeal* it. It is ſtrange that it ever ſhould be made a Queſtion, whether the Fourth Commandment, any more than the other Nine, be ſtill in Force. But, were it a Law *purely Moſaical*, and void, every Part of it is *virtually contain'd* in the *original* Inſtitution, appointed at the *Creation*, as I obſerv'd to you. But, let us ſee how the *prohibiting* Part of the Law ſtands.—"In it, (*i. e.* "on the *ſeventh* Day) Thou ſhalt do no Man-"ner of Work, Thou, and thy Son, and thy "Daughter, thy Man-ſervant, and thy Maid-"ſervant, thy Cattle, and the Stranger that "is within thy Gates." *Here* no *particular* Works are *ſpecified*, as there were in the Inſtitution *before* the giving of the Ten Commandments from the *Mount*; but only a *general* Prohibition. *Some* Sorts of Works were allowed even under the *Rigour* of the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation; according to our bleſſed Saviour's Interpretation: *Some* Exceptions, therefore, muſt be admitted here; and the *Nature* and *End* of the Law muſt be our Guide in deter-

determining the neceſſary *Limitations.* The general Intent of the Inſtitution ſeems to be ſatisfied, if Men abſtain from following their *ordinary Buſineſſes, Trades, Profeſſions,* and *Diverſions.* But thus far, I think, the Prohibitions contained in the Fourth Commandment, are binding upon *Chriſtians,* as well as *Jews,* by Virtue of that Commandment.

But there is an *additional* Obligation from *human* Authority. For,

THIRDLY, The *Legiſlature* has very wiſely interpoſed, by *Civil* Sanctions to ſecure Obedience to the Law of *God.* The Law of the Land forbids all *Trade, Commerce,* or *Buſineſs* of any kind, unleſs where it is a plain Act of *Mercy*; all *unneceſſary* frequenting of *publick* Houſes *; all *unneceſſary Travelling.* It forbids all Sorts of Sports and Games, whether publick or private. And highly proper theſe laſt-mentioned Prohibitions are: For, *Amuſements* are as inconſiſtent with the *Nature* and *End* of the Sabbath, as any kind of *Buſineſs.* Such was the *Piety* and *Wiſdom* of our *Forefathers.* I am ſorry that I cannot do Juſtice to my Subject, without giving Uneaſineſs to my ſelf, and, probably, Offence to others. It is with Reluctance, that I am obliged to mention how theſe wiſe and pious Laws are not only *neglected,* but *inſulted:* not only by the *vulgar* and *illiterate* Part of the People, but by the

* Every *Ale-Houſe* is forbid, under a Penalty to ſuffer any Body to ſit down to *Tipple,* (as the Act expreſſes it) in his Houſe.

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Rich and *Great*, by the *Makers* and *Guardians* of the Laws. They are very much injured, if *Gaming* in their own Houſes be not a common Practice among many of them; but I am ſure, I do them no Injury, if I charge them with *Travelling* openly on the *Sunday*, and in Time of *Divine Service*. After theſe influencical Examples, can it be any Wonder, that *Gaming* ſhould be ſo frequent at *Taverns* in the *polite* Parts of *Weſtminſter* *? That the Roads about *that great* City and the CAPITAL, ſhould be *crouded* with *Carriages* and *Horſes*? That even *Stage-Coaches* ſhould be permitted to go and come to and from the *Neighbouring Villages*? That *Taverns* and *Ale-houſes* in thoſe Places ſhould be full all Day long? That *Waggons* ſhould be ſeen in *remoter* Parts of the Kingdom? When the *vital* Parts are decayed, no wonder if there ſhould be Corruption and Diſtempers in the *inferior* Parts of the Body.

It is my Deſire to treat all Mankind with decent Reſpect; but if I had the Honour of addreſſing myſelf to them, I would coolly and candidly expoſtulate with ſuch of the *Nobility* and *Gentry*, as are guilty of theſe open Violations of the Laws of their Country. Setting aſide the *Obligation* ariſing from the plain Law of *God* in this Caſe, if there *be* ſuch a Thing as *moral Obligation*, we are *morally obliged* to obey all *human* Laws enacted by *ſufficient* Authority; and theſe *Prohibitions* have the Sanc-

* A Friend of mine had it from a *Waiter* in one of them, that they ſometimes uſed 30 Packs of Cards in a Day.

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tion of *all* the Authority that is veſted in the *whole Conſtitution*; and *no* Law can have *more*. If therefore the Members of the Society will take the Liberty, for their own private *Conveniency*, or *Pleaſure*, to violate the *publick* Law, there is an End of *Government* and of *Order*; of all *Decency* and *Decorum*, as well as of *Religion*. If *one* Man may take his *Pleaſure*, or a *Journey*, upon the *Sunday*, becauſe he cannot do it ſo *conveniently* on any other Day of the Week; *every* Man muſt have the *ſame* Liberty, and *every* Man muſt be the Judge of his *own Conveniency:* ſo that this *diſcretionary* Power, in *private* Perſons, of *diſpenſing* with the Law, does in Effect *vacate* the Law, and render it of no Uſe——But the Law knows nothing of theſe *private Conveniencies*, but requires *Obedience*. In Time of *Harveſt*, when the Weather has been unfavourable, and the *Corn*, or *Hay*, is in Danger of being ſpoiled, it would be *extremely convenient* for the *Farmers*, if they might take the Opportunity of a fine Day to break the *Sabbath:* But, *irreligious* as the *preſent* Age is, the very *worſt* of them do not preſume upon ſuch a Liberty; tho' there would be much more to be ſaid in Mitigation of *their* Crime, than can be pleaded in Caſes of *leſſer* Inconveniencies, ſuch as moſt People's are. Nothing but *neceſſary* Works may be done on this Day: But *Conveniencies* are not Neceſſaries. What are Neceſſaries our Saviour has determined, *viz*, *pulling an Ox out of a Ditch*, or *curing a Man that is ſick*. By *Parity*

rity of *Reaſon* we may ſave a Perſon from *Ruin*, or any *very great* Miſchief, where the Caſe requires *immediate* Aſſiſtance, as in thoſe above-mentioned. I ſay, *immediate* Aſſiſtance; for, let the Service be ever ſo great that we can do him, unleſs it be of ſuch a Nature that it cannot wait till next Day, without manifeſt Hazard of loſing the Opportunity of doing it, no *Neceſſity*, conſequently no *Mercy*, can be pleaded. But, in thoſe *Extremities* the Law of the *Land*, as well as the Law of *God*, will bear a Man out in *doing good* on the *Sabbath*-Day. But, with Reverence to the *Legiſlature* I ſpeak it, I think, the Law ſhould leave a Man, as little as poſſible, to his own *Judgment* of the *Neceſſity* of the Caſe. In *many* Caſes it *muſt* be done; in *others*, it needs not. I will inſtance in *Travelling* on the *Sunday*. There may be very good Reaſons, Reaſons of *Neceſſity*, for doing it; but, in *moſt* of theſe Caſes, it could be no Prejudice, if the Law required the Perſon to carry a *Certificate*, under the Hands of the *Miniſter* and *Church-wardens* of his Pariſh, of the *Reality* of it; or ſome ſuch Caution might be uſed. At *London*, *Watermen*, as I have been informed, are not at Liberty to carry a *Fare* without a *Permit*; unleſs it be a *Clergy-man*, *Phyſician*, *Surgeon*, *Apothecary*, or *Midwife*. And, why cannot this Caution be uſed on *Land*, as well as upon the *Water?* For want of it, we ſee the infinite bad Conſequences ariſing from a *diſcretionary* Liberty, Our Roads are filled; Perſons in

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publick and *private* Houſes hindered from doing their Duty, by wicked Families who have no Religion, and by idle People who never think. I am willing to believe, nay I know, that Numbers of thoſe who offend in this way, retain a ſerious Senſe of Duty, and trangreſs through Ignorance. Theſe I would intreat to conſider the Point, with the Attention that is due to its great Importance; and they will eaſily convince themſelves, that *Diſobedience* to *Government* is no light Offence, were the *Subject Matter* of the Law of ever ſo trifling a Nature. Every wilful Tranſgreſſion of the Laws of our Country adds to the Number of our Sins, and the Load of our Guilt; and, if perſiſted in, will increaſe our Puniſhment in the next World.

While I am upon the Head of *Prohibitions*, I muſt take notice of one Way of *profaning* the *Sabbath*, and offending againſt *Civil Authority*, which very few, I doubt, have any Notion of; I mean, *riding* out, either on *Horſeback*, or in a *Coach*, *after the Duty of the Day is over* (as they weakly imagine) whether it be to take the Air, or to make a Viſit. You may be ſurpriſed at my Doctrine, but it is certainly true, becauſe this is *travelling* and *employing Servants* and *Cattle unneceſſarily*, as much as taking a *Journey* is; and therefore is as much *forbidden*, by the *Intention* of the original Inſtitution, by the *expreſs Letter* of the 4th Commandment, and by the Laws of the Land. For the ſame Reaſon, all *unneceſſary Entertainments*

tainments on the *Sunday*, are, *virtually*, prohibited; becauſe, inſtead of *contriving* (as every Maſter of a Family ought to do) how to give his *Servants* as much *Reſt*, as poſſible, from their *ordinary* Labour, and as much *Leiſure*, as poſſible, for the Buſineſs of *Religion*, this is loading them with *extraordinary* Labour, and hindering them from doing their Duty to *God*.

Having ſhewn what we ought *not* to do upon the *Sunday*, we are next to examine what we *ought* to do. For, tho' it is a Day of *Reſt* from the ordinary Concerns of *this* Life, it is not intended for a Day of *Idleneſs*, but of BUSINESS. Let us therefore, conſider what is the *proper* Buſineſs of this Day, At the xxxiſt Chap. of *Exod. Moſes* ſays, that the *Sabbath* was *holy* unto the *Lord*, and *holy* unto the People. Before the *Deliverance* of the *Jews* from *Egypt*, the *Sabbath* was *ſanctified* to the *Knowledge* and *Worſhip* of the *true God*, as the *Creator* of the World. To the *Jews* it was *farther* ſanctified, to the *Knowledge* and *Worſhip* of Him, as their *Deliverer* from their *Egyptian Bondage*, and their *Law-giver*; as they were a *peculiar* People, *diſtinguiſhed* from the reſt of the World by a *ſelect* Body of Laws. To us CHRISTIANS the *Sunday* is *ſanctified*, i. e. *ſet apart*, for the Knowledge and Worſhip of God, as our *Creator*; and of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as our *Redeemer* and *Law-giver*; and to our *Improvement* in the Knowledge of the *Doctrines* and *Duties* of

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Christianity. From this short Account we may easily shew how *Christians* ought to spend the *Sunday*.

As the *Jews* were obliged to attend the *Jewish Worship*, at such Times as were appointed by their *Law*, and to improve themselves in the *Knowledge* of the Law, and of other *religious Truths*; so we CHRISTIANS are required to attend *christian Assemblies*, at the Times appointed by *publick Authority*; and, at *Home*, to improve ourselves and Families in *christian* Knowledge. To these *religious Uses* the *Sunday* is *sanctified*, or set *apart*; in the same Manner, as *Places* and *Things* are *consecrated*, or *set apart*, for religious Uses. And, as *they* are *profaned* whenever they are applied to *common* Uses; so the *Sunday* is *profaned*, whenever it is spent in Attendance upon the *ordinary Affairs* and *Amusements* of Life.

How often *Christians* ought to go to *Church* on *Sundays*, the *New Testament* has not specified, any more than how often in a Day we should pray in *private*, or how much of our Income we should give in *Charity*: but *publick Authority* has determined, that every Man who has an Opportunity, and is not *necessarily* hindered, should go to Church *Morning*, and *Afternoon*. You may say, *where* does the Law of the Land *expressly* require this? To which I very readily answer, *No where*; and, yet, I insist upon it that the Law *does*, nevertheless, *require* it. It is the *Will*, or *Intention*, and not the

the *Letter* only, or the *Penalty* of the Law, that binds the *Conſcience*. Now, that it *is* the *Intention* of the Law that every Man, who has an *Opportunity*, and is not *neceſſarily* hindered, ſhould go *twice* a Day is undeniably evident from its providing an *Evening*, as well as a *Morning Service*; which it would *not* have done, if it had not *meant* that the People ſhould attend it. If there where no *other* Obligations, this would be a ſufficient one upon all the Members of the *eſtabliſhed Church*, by virtue of That Obedience which is due to Government. To this Argument it may be objected, that it proves too much, becauſe it proves, *equally*, that there being a *Morning* and *Evening* Service appointed for *every* Day, *all* People are required to attend *twice* every Day. By no Means. This Appointment only ſhews, that ſuch as have an Opportunity, conſiſtently with the *neceſſary Buſineſſes*, and *ordinary* Affairs of Life, ſhould attend: But all *worldly Buſineſs* and *Recreations* on the *Sunday* being *prohibited*, the ſame Excuſes will not juſtify *Non-attendance* on *That* Day which will juſtify our not attending the *daily* Service, though we are expected to be as conſtant as *conveniently* we can.——But, If the *Legiſlature* had been *neuter* in this Caſe, who, that *calls* himſelf a *Chriſtian*, can think that *twice* a Day is *too often* to go to Church on *Sundays?* What *good* Chriſtian would not *readily* and *joyfully* embrace the Opportunity? *You*, my Brethren, are ſo happy as to *have* the Opportunity; I

wish I could see by your Behaviour, that you are duly sensible of your Happiness. In order to induce you to be more constant, I shall briefly remind you of the *Object*, and the *Subject*, of your publick Devotions; and a very little Reflection upon them will make you stand amazed at your own Conduct; that, instead of *neglecting* this honourable, this advantageous, this comfortable, and delightful Duty, upon such *little* Pretences, you are not tempted rather to be *superstitiously* pious, at the Expence of *Mercy* to others, and a proper Regard to your own Health, and Safety. It is impossible for the most elevated Genius to do Justice to the infinite Perfections, and peerless Majesty, of that God who is the *Object* of these our Devotions. He is *glorious, in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders.* His Goodness has *induced* Him, his Power and Wisdom have *enabled* Him, to *create* and *govern* more Worlds than our Imaginations can reach to the Conception of. This is so *grand*, so *awful* an Idea, that my Flesh trembleth, my Blood runs cold in my Veins, my Mind is overwhelm'd with Terror, while I think of it. And, yet, *this* is That——It is impossible for me to express the Fulness of my Thoughts.—I can only say, *this* is That *inconceivably great* and *good* Being, whom we come hither to worship. To have the Liberty of a free Address, nay, to be *invited* to *come boldly* to his Throne, and pour out our Hearts before Him, is such an *Honour* as, one would think, should excite

excite Ambition in the *Meaneſt*, and *more* than ſatisfy the Ambition of the *moſt aſpiring* Spirit. —Conſider farther, what it is that you approach Him for. We are daily, and hourly, offending this great and good God; and the firſt Part of our Buſineſs here is, to *unite* in a joint Confeſſion of our manifold Sins and Wickedneſs, and an humble Supplication for Mercy.——If we have a due Senſe of our Sins, and of the fatal Conſequences of them, ſhall we not, with the utmoſt Anxiety and Impatience, deſire the Opportunity of *joining* with our Fellow-Sinners in the *Houſe*, and upon the *Day*, dedicated by Himſelf, to his Honour; in Hopes, that the *Sacredneſs* of the *Day*, and of the *Place*, and the Force of our *united* Humiliations, might be, as they certainly are, more powerful with God than any *private* Acknowledgements in our *Cloſets?*——The next Part of our Devotions conſiſts in *Praiſes* and *Thankſgivings*, in publickly celebrating the adorable Perfections, and wonderful Works of God, eſpecially that ſtupendous Act of *Mercy*, our *Redemption* by *Chriſt Jeſus*. Praiſe, to a *generous* Mind, is a moſt *joyful* Act; and, whenever there is *Gratitude*, it is a *pleaſant thing to be Thankful*——The *remaining* Part of our Devotions conſiſts in *ſupplicating* God to continue to us his Bleſſings, to ſupply all our Wants. And, what are thoſe? The Support of our Being, with all the Neceſſaries, Conveniencies, and Comforts of it; *Grace* here and *eternal Glory* hereafter. And,——Now,

my Brethren, having fairly given you a plain State of the great Importance of our Buſineſs at *Church*, be ſo juſt to yourſelves as to *Recollect* the *pitiful* Excuſes, that often ſatisfy you in the Neglect of it. If you be *ſincere*, your Memory cannot Fail you; if you be *not*, I ſhall put you out of Countenance, and provoke you, but not convert you, by mentioning them. I ſhall only requeſt two very reaſonable things of you. The firſt is, to conſider *before-hand* how you may *order* your Affairs ſo as not to ſubject yourſelves to the Temptation of neglecting your *Church*, for the Sake of your *preſent Intereſt*——The ſecond is, when you find yourſelves inclined to ſtay at Home, particularly on *Sundays*, or go Abroad either upon ſome Scheme of *Buſineſs*, or *Pleaſure*, *ſeriouſly* to conſider with yourſelves (for it is a *very* ſerious Thing) and compare your Motives for *abſenting* yourſelves, with the ſtrong and weighty Reaſons for *going to Church*; and *then*, you muſt be *infatuated*, if you neglect *ſuch a Duty* for *ſuch Trifles*.

There is but one thing more, neceſſary towards your Inſtruction concerning the right manner of obſerving the *Sunday*, and that is, How we are to ſpend the remaining Part of the Day? It is a very prevailing, but very erroneous, Opinion, that the Duty of the Day does not *begin* 'till the Time of going to *Church* in the *Morning*, and that it *ends* with the *Evening Service*; not conſidering, that it is not only a *Part* of the Day, but the whole Day that

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is *appropriated* to *religious* Uſes. As the *Sunday* was intended to be kept in Memory of the *Creation*, and of our *Redemption*, we ought to *contemplate* upon thoſe Subjects at *Home*, as well as make them the Subject of our Praiſes and Thankſgivings *at Church*. As it is *ſanctified* to our Improvement in the Knowledge of the Doctrines and Duties of *Religion*, we ſhould, on That Day, *particularly*, employ ourſelves in reading the *Bible*, and other *good* Books (not *Romances* and *Novels*; not *Plays*, or *profane Hiſtory*; not Books relating to *worldly* and *ſecular* Affairs; the *Sunday* was not *conſecrated* for *ſuch* Uſes, but *religious* Books;) in order to *know* our Duty, and be excited to the *Performance* of it; and to compare our *Lives* with the *Rule* of our Actions, that we may ſee where we have been defective; and thoſe who have *Families*, ſhould ſee after *their* Inſtruction, as well as their *own*. *Theſe* are the Uſes for which the *Sunday* was intended; and when it is not applied in this *Manner*, it is *profaned*. No Body can ſay, but that theſe Things muſt be done at ſome Time, or another; but, unleſs there be ſome *ſet* Times for doing them, the Generality of Mankind would wholly Neglect them; which ſhews how *expedient*, I might have ſaid, *neceſſary*, the Inſtitution of the *Sunday* is for theſe religious Purpoſes.——But, is the *whole* Day ſo *abſolutely* devoted to *Religion*, that no Body muſt make a Viſit, or take any ſort of Recreation, even where it can be done without

making their *Servants* and their *Cattle* WORK; eſpecially, the *Trading* and LABOURING Part of Mankind, who have little Leiſure at any other Time, to ſee their Friends, or for any other *Amuſement?* I dare not ſay ſo.——But this I dare ſay, That the *leſs frequent*, and the *ſhorter* our Viſits are, (unleſs, they be charitable Viſits to the Sick) and the *leſs* Pleaſure Men take on *Sundays*, the better; that our Thoughts may not be too long *interrupted*, or *indiſpoſed*, for thoſe ſerious Subjects which ought to employ us at that Time. An Attention to Things *foreign* to the Buſineſs of the Day, will not only *interrupt* it, but render the Mind leſs capable of doing it in a proper manner. An Attention to *pleaſurable* Objects, or *Converſation*, will more *indiſpoſe* us for *Religion* than any *honeſt Calling* would do. *Light Mirth*, or any *agreeable Amuſement*, diſſipates Thought; and begets a *Levity* of Mind that is utterly inconſiſtent with That *Compoſure* and *Gravity* which every Part of the Duty of the Day requires. The *Rich* are the moſt inexcuſable if they *trifle* away the *Sunday* in *impertinent Amuſements*, becauſe *they* have the *whole Week* at their Command, and are *always* at Leiſure to take more Pleaſure than is conſiſtent with the *Temper*, and *Duties*, of a *good Chriſtian*. As to the *poor*, and *buſy* Part of the World, that I may not be Thought *rigid*, I chuſe not to give you my *own* Sentiments, but I will give you the Opinion of a moſt eminent *Prelate*, ſo remarkable for his *Candour*, that

that his Enemies accuſed him of being *too looſe* in his Notions; I mean, the *Great*, and Good Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*; his Words are theſe, "Not that we are excuſed from minding Religion at *other* Times; but that thoſe who are *ſtraitened* at other Times by the neceſſary Cares of this Life, may be ſure to mind it *then*; and may have no Colour of Excuſe for the Neglect of it at *that Time*, which God hath allotted for that very Purpoſe, and which it is unlawful to employ about our *worldly* Affairs. God expects that we ſhould ſerve Him at *other* Times, that we ſhould live in an *habitual* Senſe of Him; but *This* He peremptorily challengeth to *Himſelf*, and expects that we ſhould employ it in *his* Service, and dedicate it to *Religion*, to the Contemplation of God, and heavenly Things, with the ſame Serioufneſs and Diligence, as we do upon other Days employ *our Labour for the Meat that periſheth*; and the leſs Leiſure (mind *This*) we have upon other Days for this Purpoſe, the more *entirely* ſhould we *devote* and *conſecrate* this Day, to the Purpoſes and Duties of *Religion*."

And, now, upon the Whole, I appeal to any one of you, whether one Day in ſeven ſpent in ſuch a Manner, as I have deſcribed, would not make you pleaſed with yourſelves, beget a Tranquillity and Self-complacency of Mind at Night, and have a very great Influence upon your Thoughts and Actions during the whole Week? This is a very *rational*, but

not the *only* Motive for a due Obſervation of the *Sunday*. For we have Reaſon to expect the Diſpleaſure and Vengeance of God, if we *profane* it; and, conſequently, a particular Reward, if we conſcientiouſly obſerve it. You have heard, in the Scripture Hiſtory of the *Sabbath*, that the Inſtitution was guarded with the moſt ſolemn Sanction.——If any one violates it, *He ſhall ſurely be put to Death.*—— *That Soul ſhall be cut off.* If we look into the *Prophets*, they will tell us, how ſeverely God has threatened, and how ſeverely he has puniſhed, the Breach of it. I ſhall cite two of them, which are very ſufficient to awaken your Apprehenſions. " *Neh.* xiii. 16, 17, 18. " There dwelt Men of *Tyre* alſo therein, " which brought Fiſh, and all Manner of " Ware, and ſold on the *Sabbath* unto the " Children of *Judah*, and in *Jeruſalem*. Then " I contended with the *Nobles* of *Judah*, and " ſaid unto them, What evil Thing is This " that ye do, and *profane* the Sabbath Day? " Did not your Fathers thus, and did not our " God bring all this Evil upon us, and upon " this City? Yet ye bring *more* Wrath upon " *Iſrael* by *profaning* the *Sabbath*." *Iſaiah*, Chap. lviii. 13. promiſeth a particular *Bleſſing* to thoſe that did NOT *go after their own Doings*; i. e. follow the Buſineſs of *this* Life; nor *take their Pleaſure on the Sabbath Day*, &c. At the xviith Chapter *Jeremiah* tells the *Jews*, that if they *carried any Burdens out of their Houſes, and through the Gates of Jeruſalem, that*

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if they did not hallow the Sabbath Day, but did bear Burdens on the Sabbath Day; even entering in at the Gates of Jeruſalem on the Sabbath Day; then, God would *kindle a Fire in the Gates thereof, that* ſhould *devour the Palaces of Jeruſalem,* and that *it ſhould not be quenched,* Ver. 27. And at Ver. 24, 25. there is as great a *Bleſſing* promiſed to the *Obſervance* of the Sabbath, "If you diligently hearken unto "me, ſaith the Lord, to Bring in no Burden "through the Gates of this City on the Sab- "bath Day; but hallow the Sabbath Day, "to do no Work therein: then ſhall there "enter into the Gates of this City, Kings and "Princes ſitting upon the Throne of David, "riding in Chariots, and on Horſes, *&c.* and "this City ſhall remain for ever."

My Brethren, Do ye really believe the *Bible* to be the *Word of God*, or do ye *not?* If ye look upon theſe ſtrong Declarations of Anger and Approbation as *invented Stories*, I have cited them to no Purpoſe; but if they be *real Facts*, they are of great Moment, foraſmuch as we have all imaginable Reaſon to believe that the Breach of the *Sunday* is as offenſive, and the due Obſervance of it as acceptable, to God, now, as the Breach or Obſervance of the *Sabbath* was under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation. Nay, much more ſo, the *Sunday*, our *Chriſtian* Sabbath, being appointed in Honour of *Chriſt*, our *Redeemer*. If God puniſhed the *Jews* ſo ſeverely for carrying Burdens, for kindling a Fire, for doing the *leaſt* Work, or taking

taking their *Pleaſure*, on *their* Sabbath, and not delighting, rather to ſpend it in *religious* Exerciſes; will he not take Vengeance on us *Chriſtians*, if we follow our *ordinary* Concerns and Recreations on the *Sunday*, which is, in Obedience to the *Original* Inſtitution of a *Sabbath*, and the Fourth Commandment, to be obſerved in Memory of the *Creation*, as much as the *Jewiſh Sabbath* was, and in Memory of a much greater Deliverance than That of the *Jews* from *Egypt?* It is intended as a Day of *Reſt*, that we may be at *Leiſure* to frequent Aſſemblies where Ordinances are adminiſtered, that are of a much higher, and more beneficial Nature, than any of the *Jewiſh Inſtitutions*; where more ſublime Doctrines, more important Truths, and more perfect Precepts, are taught, and explained. It is intended, that on this Day we ſhould *privately* improve ourſelves in the Knowledge and Practice of a more excellent Religion; fit ourſelves for a State of greater Happineſs, and avoid a greater Miſery, than was threatened, or promiſed, under the *Moſaical Diſpenſation.* All theſe Circumſtances conſidered, the Guilt of *profaning* the *Sunday* muſt be proportionably greater than the *Profanation* of the *Jewiſh Sabbath*; and can we believe that where the *Sin* is greater, the Puniſhment will be *leſs?* It may not be ſo *viſible*; *Judgment may not be executed ſpeedily.* The *Firſt* Covenant was eſtabliſhed upon *temporal* Sanctions; the *ſecond*, upon *inviſible*, and *eternal* Ones; but this

this does not *exclude* a *general*, or a *particular Providence*, that *interposes*, though not *apparently*, either to *bless*, or to *punish Nations*, or *particular* Persons. And what can better *intitle* us to his *Favour*, than a due Observance of his *favourite* Institution? What more likely to bring down a *Curse* upon us, than Disobedience in so *tender* a Point? If God were to inflict upon us no other Punishment than *withdrawing* his *Grace* for neglecting so great a Means of *Improvement* in Piety and Virtue, This would exceed any Evil that we can suffer in *this* Life; and the Apprehension of so great a Danger ought to awaken us into a careful and regular Discharge of this Important Duty. But, whether Chastisements overtake us *here*, or not, we are *sure* that *Judgment*, at the LAST GREAT DAY, will pronounce a most severe Sentence upon those who have wilfully, and habitually, *profaned* the *Sunday*. It will, *then*, be of no Signification that they contriv'd, by *Secrecy*, to escape publick Notice; that silly People have been afraid, or ashamed, to *inform* against them; or that indolent Magistrates have neglected to put the Laws in Execution. All *hidden* Sins will be laid open; all such *secret Sinners* will be detected: and all such as, through Cowardice, or want of Zeal for the Honour of God, have not endeavoured to *prevent* such Instances of *Profanation*, will be Sharers in their *Punishment*, because Partakers with them in their *Guilt*.——I hope, there are none in this Place who do not believe

lieve the Certainty of a *Providence*, a *future State*, and a *future Judgment*. To *all ſuch* what I have ſaid, concerning God's Anger and Favour, muſt be affecting, if any Arguments can affect them: but as I intend, God willing, to *print* theſe Sermons, they may poſſibly light into the Hands of ſome *Infidels*; and, therefore, I ſhall offer ſome Conſiderations that deſerve *their* Attention, becauſe they affect their *preſent* Happineſs.

The Happineſs of Mankind in *this* Life muſt, in a great meaſure, depend upon the Peace and good Order of civil Society; witneſs, the many Frauds, Thefts, Robberies, Murders, Maimings, and other Crimes, which make it unſafe to place that Confidence in one another which Trade, Commerce, Friendſhip, and all Intercourſe require; which make it dangerous to travel by Day, or ſleep at Night; to go Abroad, or to ſtay at Home. We ſee, we *feel*, how Deſtructive theſe Enormities are to *ſocial Happineſs*, and have Reaſon to dread their quick Progreſs, and our *growing Danger*. Theſe Evils are like a great Stone rolling down-hill, which rolls the faſter the nearer it comes to the *Bottom*. All thinking People muſt be deſirous of ſeeing a *Regulation* of ſuch Diſorders; and many are projecting the proper Means of effecting it. Many Remedies, no doubt, may conſpire towards a Cure of this dangerous Diſtemper. I hope, in my Turn I may be allowed the Liberty of propoſing one. Like moſt other good Medicines,

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mine is very *ſimple*, conſiſting of two Ingredients, only; *Religion*, and *Virtue*. To talk of keeping the World in order without *their* Aſſiſtance, is mere *Quackery*. You may as well imagine that a Ship, with all her Sails crouded, but without Ballaſt or Rudder, ſhould ride ſafe amidſt Rocks and Shelves in a Tempeſt. *Infidels* pay a *Compliment* to Religion, when they intend to *vilify* Her. They ſuppoſe Her to be a Compoſition contrived by *Prieſts*, or *Politicians*. But for what Ends? For her *Utility*, for her *Neceſſity*, towards the Support of *Civil Society*. Is this *indeed* the Caſe? What could be a ſtronger Recommendation of her to thoſe who believe no *future State*, than to ſay that She is *neceſſary* to the publick Peace and Order of the World? What can be a greater Reproach to their *Underſtanding*, to their *Common Senſe* and *Prudence* (for as to *Conſcience* they *pretend* to none) than to depreciate, and deſtroy, the great Means of their own Safety and Happineſs? Men, in every Relation of Life, want, and deſire, the friendly Aids of Religion; and yet moſt People ſlight Her, and many abuſe Her.

Religion being acknowledged to be the great Support of *Society*, What is *the great Means* of ſupporting *Her?* Various are the Concurrent Helps that may be given Her, but there is *one* Means worth them all, and without which all the reſt will be *ineffectual*. This is provided us by the infinite Wiſdom of God. I mean, the regular Obſervation of the *Sunday*, in the

Manner

Manner that I have recommended to you. What Effects it would have upon the Minds, and Manners of Men, muſt be obvious to the loweſt Underſtanding that will think a little. How abſolutely neceſſary it is, eſpecially in our preſent Circumſtances, will appear from a curſory View of the State of the Nation, and the Nature of Things. Can Men believe the Truths of Religion without any Evidence? Or have any Evidence without Inſtruction? Can they *practiſe* their Duty without *knowing* it? Or will they be *inclin'd* to do it, without having a Conception of the proper *Motives?* Can Men be *religious* without ever *ſeriouſly thinking* about it? And yet, it is evident that the *Generality* of Mankind, without *Compulſion*, will think of nothing but *Buſineſs* or *Pleaſure*. They muſt owe all the little that they do know, and *practiſe*, of Religion, to *publick Inſtruction*, and *publick Worſhip*. If this Obſervation were ever true, it is more particularly ſo at this Time; when *Luxury* and *Voluptuouſneſs*, thoſe Enemies to all ſerious Thought and Reflection, to every Religious and Virtuous Diſpoſition, are at ſo great an Height, that People neglect the Concerns of *this* Life, as well as of the next. There is a *continual Rotation* of pleaſurable Amuſements *; ſome

* We have been lately told in one of the Daily Papers, that the Reſort to the *Play-Houſes* is ſo much increaſed within twenty Years paſt, that the Managers can afford to give the *firſt* Rate Actors 1000 *l.* a Year, and the *ſecond* Rate 500 *l.* Such are the Wages of thoſe who *pleaſe* and *corrupt* Mankind; while many honeſt Men, who have ſpent their Life in doing *ſolid Good*, are *unſupported*, *unrewarded*, and even *ſlighted*.

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of them Inflammatory Provocatives to Luſt, and calculated for intriguing; all of them tending to baniſh Reflection, and weaken the Mind, when it is ſo *conſtantly* attentive to them. I have not Time to paint all theſe Scenes of Entertainment, and deſcribe their natural Effects, eſpecially on *young* Minds, warm, unexperienced, fond of Pleaſure, in the Heat of Blood, and impatient of Application to any thing that is of a *grave* Nature. Do not theſe Circumſtances make it the more neceſſary to *oblige* all People to devote *one* Day in *ſeven* to ſuch Uſes as may be an *Antidote* againſt ſuch ſtrong Poiſon? His *Majeſty*, in his laſt Speech from the Throne, recommended it to the Conſideration of *Parliament*, how to put a Stop to thoſe Enormities, which terrify every ſober Perſon that thinks of them. This was worthy of his Majeſty's tender Care of the Happineſs of his People; and I hope it will not be thought a Piece of *Preſumption* in me, if I obſerve, that regulating publick Entertainments, and inforcing of the Obſervation of the *Sunday*, will be the moſt effectual Means of doing it.

PREFACE.

I HAVE *nothing more to offer, by Way of Preface to this Diſcourſe, but that I have no other View in publiſhing it, beſides an honeſt Inclination to do ſome Good. I have the Pleaſure to find myſelf much affected by it, and am not without Hopes that it may have ſome Influence upon a few more: To be the Inſtrument, under God, of forwarding the Salvation of Mankind, is the greateſt Honour that we can have in This Life, and the only Pleaſure that is worth a wiſe Man's Living for. I am a Candidate for another World; and what ſhould make an* IMMORTAL Being *very anxious, or much delighted, but the Thoughts of* IMMORTALITY? *I am Travelling to a Country from whence I ſhall never Return; and I*

see many of my Fellow-Travellers as intent upon their Accommodations as if They were at Home, and scrambling for what They are going to leave behind Them. I see Them with some Amazement, with more Concern, but with as little Envy as I see a Party of Children highly pleas'd with their Childish Diversions, or squabbling about their Marbles. I wish, the Employment and Amusements of a great Part of Mankind were as innocent; I am sure They are, comparatively, as insignificant.

READER; *If you be not quite Mad, be Wise for Eternity.*

Farewell.

St.

St. LUKE, Chap. x. Ver. 42.

But one Thing is needful.

THO' the Occaſion of theſe Words was particular, the Inſtruction intended to be convey'd by them is general, *viz.* That Religion, and the Security of our future Happineſs, ought to be our grand Buſineſs and Concern in this Life; that they are, in their Importance, ſo infinitely ſuperior to all other Conſiderations, that our Saviour ſtiles them the *One Thing needful*; nothing elſe, when compar'd with them, being of any Moment at all: As the longeſt Period of Time is ſwallow'd up in the immeaſurable Abyſs of Eternity, like a Drop of Water in the largeſt Ocean. This momentous and awful Truth I purpoſe to make the Subject of my preſent Diſcourſe.

But, why ſo much Pains to prove what no Man in his Senſes will offer to deny? Evident as this Truth is, when conſider'd, it is as evident that very few conſider it, ſo as to give it its proper Influence upon their Conduct; and therefore the moſt Learned, the moſt Knowing, the moſt Religious, may be the better for Admonition, when they ſtand in no need of Inſtruction. Let not any one then, be his Parts

and Attainments ever ſo great, diſdain to read a plain Diſcourſe. Plain, as I intend to make it, I hope, by the Grace of God aſſiſting me, to make it ſo clear and ſtrong, that it ſhall be the Reader's Fault if he be not the better for it. I do preſume it will be allow'd me that there is ſuch a Thing as Wiſdom and Folly; that there are certain Maxims and Rules of Conduct, which are eſtabliſh'd by the univerſal Conſent and Practice of Mankind, in reſpect to their worldly Concerns: Upon theſe Maxims I purpoſe to argue with you; And if they have any Force, when apply'd to your Conduct in the Affairs of this Life, they muſt hold much ſtronger when apply'd to the Concerns of a future State, where our Happineſs, or Miſery, will be greater and more laſting, Eternal and Inconceiveable. In my further Diſcourſe upon this Subject, I ſhall addreſs myſelf to four different Sorts of People.

Firſt, To thoſe who pretend to diſbelieve the great Truths of Religion upon full Conviction, after a diligent and impartial Examination of the Evidence on both Sides of the Queſtion.

Secondly, To thoſe who only entertain ſome Doubts about it.

Thirdly, To thoſe who never give themſelves any Concern about the Matter.

Fourthly, To thoſe who profeſs a thorough Belief of them.

Firſt, I ſhall in the firſt Place addreſs myſelf to thoſe unhappy Perſons who pretend to diſbelieve the great Truths of Religion, upon full Con-

Conviction, after a diligent and impartial Examination of the Evidence on both Sides of the Queſtion. I ſay who *pretend* to do ſo, for I am fully ſatisfied that out of the Number of thoſe, who profeſs themſelves ſuch ſettled Infidels, there are very few that are really ſuch. One I knew, who died as determin'd as he liv'd; but that *Collins* and *Toland* did not, I have good Reaſons to believe. Neither do I think that there ever was an Infidel who had examined the Evidence on both Sides of the Queſtion, with Diligence and Impartiality. They may have taken a good deal of Pains to enquire into the Arguments, but then it has been with an Intent to find Objections, not to receive Information. They brought ſtrong Prejudices and Prepoſſeſſions with them, imbib'd early by the means of bad Company, or bad Books; or elſe ariſing from the Inconſiſtency of religious Truths with the Indulgence of ſome favourite Vice which they were determin'd not to part with. But if they would act rationally, they muſt attend to the Evidence without any Biaſs from an Inclination to Infidelity. For if they wiſh that Religion may not appear to be true, like the Jaundice that gives a falſe Colour to every Object, ſuch an Inclination will certainly hinder the Mind from ſeeing any Argument in its proper Light. But is this acting wiſely in a Matter of ſuch infinite Moment? For, our Inclinations cannot alter the Nature and Force of Arguments. Religion will not be the leſs true for our wiſhing that it were not ſo. But I will ven-

ture to affirm, that, in the Nature of Things, it is utterly impoſſible that any Man can have ſufficient Evidence upon which he may build a rational, firm Conviction, that what we call the great Truths of Religion, the Exiſtence of a God, a Providence, and a State of Happineſs, or Miſery in another Life, are Fictions. On the Side of Infidelity there can be no direct Evidence at all, ſince no Man can demonſtrate that the Suppoſition of a God, a Providence, and a future State, is abſurd and impoſſible. Neither is it any Abſurdity, or Contradiction to the Nature of Things, to ſuppoſe that there may be a Revelation. All that any ſenſible Infidel can ſay, is, that there is not ſufficient Evidence, upon which we may build a full and clear Conviction of the Truth of theſe grand Points; there can be, as I ſaid, no direct Proof on the other Side of the Queſtion. This naturally leads me,

Secondly, To apply myſelf to thoſe, who are in doubt about theſe great Truths. For Argument's Sake, I will ſuppoſe, that the Truths do not appear quite ſatisfactory; yet, if they carry any Degree of Credibility with them, we ought, in common Senſe, to act as if there was a moral Certainty of their being true. I wou'd aſk theſe Doubters, how they wou'd think it prudent to act under ſuch a State of Uncertainty, with regard to their preſent Happineſs. I will ſtate the Matter as ſtrongly in Favour of Infidelity and Irreligion, as I poſſibly can, by ſuppoſing (what every one knows to be falſe) the Practice of Religion and Virtue to be always attended with

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an uninterrupted Series of Self-denial and Mortification, with every Sort and Degree of Evil, which human Nature is capable of ſuffering in this Life; and that a vicious Courſe of Life is as uniformly accompanied with every Sort and Degree of Happineſs that human Nature is capable of enjoying. Now, let us ſuppoſe, that, if the former has the Patience to perſevere in the Practice of Religion and Virtue, for one Week, under ſuch hard Circumſtances, he has a Chance (let the Chance be as low as can be imagined) of being rewarded, at the End of this ſhort Period of Time, with an uninterrupted Series of the moſt conſummate Happineſs that human Nature is capable of enjoying for ten thouſand Years; in a Country the moſt delightful that can be conceiv'd, and abounding with the greateſt Plenty of the moſt valuable and agreeable Products; and conſtantly enjoying them with the keeneſt Appetite, in Company with the moſt inſtructive and agreeable Companions, always ſtudying how to pleaſe and ſerve one another. Let us again ſuppoſe, that the vicious Man ſtands the ſame Chance of his being puniſhed for his poor Week's Enjoyment, with every Sort and Degree of Miſery that human Nature is capable of feeling for ten thouſand Years; living in a barren Country, that does not afford one agreeable Object to pleaſe the Eyes, but is full of frightful Scenes, of Storms and Tempeſts; tormented with Appetites that He cannot gratify, in Company with the moſt diſagreeable Perſons, whoſe only Mu-

ſick is the Sound of Curſes, whoſe only Delight is to give Uneaſineſs to one another, and in utter Deſpair of having their Condition mended.

I have put a very fair Caſe; and if there be ſuch a Thing as *Common Senſe*, I appeal to it for an Anſwer. Wou'd not any Man of the loweſt Share of Underſtanding, wou'd not any one, but a downright Madman, or Ideot, ſuffer ſuch a ſhort-liv'd Miſery for the loweſt Chance of ſuch a noble Prize? Or what cou'd be thought of him, who, for the Sake of a Week's Enjoyment, wou'd run the leaſt Hazard of being ſo compleatly miſerable for ſo long a Period of Time as ten thouſand Years? And does the longeſt Life of Man on Earth bear as great a Proportion to Eternity, as a Week does to ten thouſand Years? No; the longeſt Period of Time bears no Proportion at all to Eternity. A Duration that is not in the Power of Numbers to meaſure. O! vaſt Eternity! how doeſt thou ſwallow up our Thoughts, and fill us at once with Delight and Amazement. Thou art like the Sight of God, ſo dreadful, that it is difficult for mortal Man to look on thee attentively and live. And, if the bare Conception of Eternity be ſo affecting, how will you be ſhock'd if you add the Idea of *Miſery* to *Eternity!* Shou'd we form to ourſelves the Imagination of immediately becoming miſerable without Intermiſſion and without Hope, during our whole Life, the very Thought wou'd make us turn

pale

pale and tremble. Extend your Apprehenſion to the Age of *Methuſelah*; then add a Million of Ages; go on to multiply the Product of that Sum by as many Millions as Figures can expreſs; and then think, if yon can bear the Thought, that after the Expiration of this long, long Period, you will be no nearer the End of your Miſery than you was at the Beginning of it. O Eternity! What art Thou! Where am I! I am loſt. My Head ſwims, and I grow giddy. Do thou, O bleſſed Jeſus, ſtrengthen my labouring Mind. I faint, I ſink, do thou ſupport my Spirits. Let me, then, thou Sceptic, beſeech thee to act like a *Man*, like a *rational Creature*. I defy thee, with all thy boaſted Reaſoning, to demonſtrate that thou ſhalt not be eternally happy or eternally miſerable, in another Life, according as thou demeaneſt thyſelf in this. And does not the Conſideration of the infinite Difference between *Time* and *Eternity* make it a Point of the greateſt Wiſdom to act upon much leſs Evidence than we have for theſe Truths. For, in Matters of ſuch unſpeakably great Importance, it concerns us always to be on the ſureſt Side, where we venture leaſt, if we ſhou'd happen to be miſtaken. And which is the ſureſt Side? To believe, or diſbelieve Chriſtianity, and ſuch a State of future Rewards and Puniſhments as are the Sanctions of it? If Chriſtianity be true, (and they cannot diſprove the Truth of it) and there be an eternal State of Rewards and Puniſhments inconceivably great,

great, we are undone for ever; but if we do believe it, and live up to its Precepts, we loſe nothing by it but the tranſient Pleaſures of Sin, and inſtead of them we have the joyfulleſt Hopes; which to a good Man are more raviſhing and tranſporting than any of the Enjoyments of this World can give to the Wicked. In ſhort, the Miſeries denounc'd againſt Unbelievers are ſo very terrible that no thinking Man in his Senſes would run the leaſt Hazard of them; but, inſtead of demanding *Demonſtration* of there being ſuch a Place of exquiſite Torment, wou'd demand demonſtrative Certainty, that *there is not*, before he wou'd venture: And the Happineſs promis'd to good Chriſtians ſo far exceeds our Imagination, that a very little Evidence wou'd perſuade a truly wiſe Man to venture any Thing for the Sake of it. Before I take Leave of theſe Doubters, who, profeſſing themſelves wiſe, act very fooliſhly and madly, I muſt obſerve, that tho' I have condeſcended to argue with them upon their own Principles, it is not becauſe the Evidence for religious Truths is really weak and doubtful! Had I Time I cou'd ſhew that it is ſufficient to create a *moral Certainty*. As to myſelf, I no more doubt of them than if I had the Evidence of *Senſe* and ſtrict *Demonſtration* to convince me. And the oftener and more attentively I examine into them the more I am convinced. And this has been the Caſe of Numbers in all Ages, of the greateſt Abilities both natural and acquir'd, who have conſider'd

theſe

theſe Points with the utmoſt Diligence, Coolneſs, and Impartiality. And ſurely, the concurrent Teſtimony of ſuch a Variety of the moſt learned and judicious Perſons, confirming, by their Opinions and Practice, the Strength of the *poſitive* Evidence for Religion, both natural and reveal'd, demand ſo much Regard from every wiſe Man as to induce him not to act as if Religion were falſe, till he can find better Authorities and clearer Proofs in Support of *Infidelity*, or *Scepticiſm*. But, theſe Men never attempt to bring any *direct* and *poſitive* Proofs, but only ſtart Difficulties, and endeavour to weaken the Force of *our* Arguments. And is this ſufficient to juſtify them in riſking the Loſs of eternal Happineſs, and running the Hazard of being eternally miſerable? This is bringing a Scandal upon *Reaſon* and *Common Senſe*. But I ſhall take the Liberty of Quoting another Illuſtration of their *Folly* and *Madneſs* from a Sermon of my own upon *Impenitency*, p. 14, 15. " It " is not enough to doubt, but you muſt be " aſſur'd, by the cleareſt Arguments, that " what the Goſpel ſays of *Heaven* and *Hell* is " all Romance, If walking in the dark, you " ſhou'd hear a Multitude of People, with the " utmoſt Earneſtneſs and Concern, crying out " aloud, Travellers, I beg of you to quit your " Road inſtantly, for it leads to a bottomleſs " Pit, where you will lie in Pain and Miſery " for ever, and you are got upon the Brink of " it. Tho' you ſhou'd not immediately be

" fully

" fully convinc'd, wou'd not the *bare Poſſibi-*
" *lity* of its being true, the frightful Appre-
" henſion, make you take another Road, if
" you knew of one where there cou'd be no
" ſuch Danger? I ſay, wou'd you in ſuch a
" Caſe dare to move one Step farther in it?
" No, you cou'd not do it. Your Imagination
" wou'd fill your Mind with ſuch Horror, that
" your Limbs, as well as your Heart, wou'd
" fail you. This, thou Doubter, is a true,
" but faint Image of thy Condition. You are
" walking in thick Darkneſs, not knowing
" whither your preſent Courſe of Life will
" lead you. Under this Uncertainty you hear
" the Prophets, the Apoſtles, the Martyrs,
" and Confeſſors for Chriſtianity; you hear
" Teachers and Writers, without Number,
" in all Ages, and from all Parts of the
" World, crying, Hold, miſerable Wretch!
" the Path in which you are now going will
" lead you to eternal Deſtruction. If you will
" take the contrary Road, you will find it, in
" general, full as pleaſant, and, in ſome Parts
" of it, much pleaſanter, and it will carry
" you ſafe to a moſt delightful Country. And,
" for your Encouragement to take our Advice,
" we are ſo far from having any Intereſt, or
" bad Deſign, in giving you this Intelligence,
" that we take the ſame Road, ourſelves, but
" not before we had us'd all poſſible Means
" of Information concerning the Nature and
" Tendency of it. You ſee how fooliſhly and
" madly they act, let not therefore their Cha-

" racters,

" racters, be their Rank, their Parts, their " Reputation, what they will, any way in- " fluence your Judgment, or Practice, but " look upon them, as they are, Objects of " Compassion for their Unhappiness, and of " Indignation for their Wickedness." But

Thirdly, There is another Set of Men, who, if possible, act more foolishly and madly, than either of the other. For, though these Points must be acknowledg'd to be of the last Importance, they have never thought it worth while to consider them, never thought of them, at all, but live extempory Lives; follow the Impulse of every Passion that happens to move them; pursue every Scheme that occurs to their Mind; without ever looking forward to Consequences. The others judge and act extremely wrong, unbecoming Philosophers; but these Men act below the Conduct of the *Animal* Part of the Creation. *Beasts* and *Birds* act with more Regard to Self-Preservation. As far as *Instinct* teaches them wherein their Danger lies, they are ever watchful, ever studious, to avoid it. Only these *Beasts* of *Reason* act without any Regard to their own Safety. In order to illustrate the exceeding great Folly of these heedless, giddy Creatures, I shall borrow another Illustration from the Sermon above-mention'd, p. 8. " Suppose a skilful " Architect should give a Man Warning that " his House is so decay'd, that it is in Danger " of tumbling over his Head, shou'd not such " Notice oblige him in common Prudence

" either

" either to quit it inſtantly, or, at leaſt, to " have it carefully examin'd, before he ven- " tures to continue in it? And, if, notwith- " ſtanding this friendly Caution, he ſhou'd " ſtrive, by Buſineſs, or Pleaſure, to divert " his Thoughts from attending to his Danger, " inſtead of avoiding it, wou'd not the World " ſay that the Man was diſtracted, or that he " was utterly void of common Senſe? And, " yet, this is an exact Picture of this mon- " ſtrous Indolency." I muſt own a Miſtake; for the Caſe is not *parallel.* The Men of whom I am ſpeaking, have Warning of a Danger infinitely greater, and, yet, are as unmov'd by it. And if any accidental Cauſe ſhou'd force them to entertain a tranſient Thought of their Danger, they are very induſtrious to baniſh it out of their Minds; as if they could take away the *Reality* and *Certainty* of their future Miſery by not thinking of it. But, as they are not likely to attend to any Thing that can be ſaid to them, I ſhall ſay no more upon this Head. I ſhould have been quite ſilent, if I had not been in Hopes that others might learn Wiſdom by ſeeing a ſtrong Picture of *their* Folly. I come, now

In the *Fourth*, and laſt, Place ſeriouſly to addreſs myſelf to thoſe who profeſs a thorough Belief of religious Truths. And I muſt tell ſuch Chriſtian Readers, that, in ſome Reſpects, they act more inconſiſtently and abſurdly than either of the other three Sorts of People. The Firſt pretend to be fully perſuaded that Religion

gion is a *Cheat*, and that there is no such Thing as a *future State*; in Consequence of which Persuasion, they think it prudent to make the most of this World, to make their own present Interest and Happiness the sole Rule of their Conduct. They judge wrong in entertaining such a settled Opinion, where there can be no positive Proof; but they act right upon their Principles. The Second Sort are as much to blame, in running the Risque of losing eternal Happiness, and bringing eternal Destruction upon themselves, only because the Evidence for the Truth of those grand Points does not appear to them sufficiently clear and strong, for, in Matters of such infinite Moment, a less Degree, any Degree, of Evidence ought to govern their Conduct; but grant them their Premises and their Conclusion will be just. The Third Sort act as absurdly, but with some Difference. The next World is invisible and distant; the Things of this World are present and visible; from whence they conclude that it is not worth their while to trouble themselves about such Matters. They agree with the others in acting very madly, but they differ in this Circumstance, that, whereas the former act right upon wrong Principles, these act wrong in Consequence of just Premises. It is true, that this World is present and visible, but it does not follow from thence that invisible and distant Things cannot be worth the Consideration of a wise Man. But these last Sort of *Fools* and *Madmen*, are in every Respect incon-

inconſiſtent and inexcuſable, for, they act in Defiance of their ſettled Principles; they believe Chriſtianity, they publickly profeſs their Belief of it; and yet daily, hourly, and deliberately contradict their Faith in their Practice. Have the Patience to give Attention while I enlarge a little upon the monſtrous Inconſiſtency of ſuch Conduct. I have a Right to demand this of you, becauſe you acknowledge that the Subject is of ſuch vaſt Moment, that it deſerves your moſt attentive Conſideration.

The firſt great Truth and Foundation of all Religion is, the Belief of a Deity who made you, and made you capable of knowing and contemplating and imitating his moral Perfections; you profeſs to believe that *Reaſon* and *Revelation* teach you that it is your Duty, and will be your Happineſs, ſo to do; and yet, how many nominal Chriſtians ever think ſeriouſly, how many ſcarce ever think at all, about the Nature and Attributes of this adorable Author of their Being, and Fountain of their Happineſs; unleſs it be now and then, when they are put in Mind of him at Church, or in Converſation. You profeſs to believe that this Being, infinitely wiſe, juſt, good, and powerful, governs the World; and do Chriſtians in general act agreeably to this Perſuaſion? Do they ſubmit and reſign themſelves to his Diſpenſations? No, if they did, whence ſo much fretting, ſo much murmuring, ſo much Diſtruſt under any Afflictions and Diſappointments? Whence ſo many indirect Means to extricate ourſelves, when we believe

believe and acknowledge that if we truſt in him, and apply to him, every thing ſhall work together for our Good; that he will either remove our Difficulties, or ſupport us under them, or reward us for bearing them patiently? You believe that it is your Duty privately and publickly to worſhip God, as frequently, as attentively, and as fervently as poſſibly you can; and yet how many of you never addreſs yourſelves to him in Prayer in private, or with your Family? How often do you neglect publick Worſhip upon ſuch ſcandalouſly trifling Pretences, as wou'd not hinder you from going to make a common Viſit, or taking your Pleaſure? And when you are at your Devotions, with what Inattention, with what Coldneſs and Irreverence do you perform them? I do not mean only the poor and illiterate, but Perſons of better Education and more Knowledge; not excepting ſome of the Great, and the Learned. And can ſuch People ſincerely believe that Religion is the one Thing needful? You muſt bear with my honeſt Freedom a little longer.

Chriſtians believe the Bible to be the Word of God; that it is an ineſtimable Treaſure of the moſt excellent, the moſt uſeful, and entertaining Knowledge; that it contains every Thing that is neceſſary for us to believe and practiſe, in order to our eternal Happineſs; that it is both in Reſpect to the Author, and Subject Matter of it, worthy of the moſt profound Reverence, and conſtant and moſt careful Peruſal. And

do Chriſtians in general, like holy *David*, make it their conſtant Study and chief Delight? No, they ſeldom look into it, as if it were the moſt dull and inſipid, the moſt trifling and uſeleſs Book that ever was publiſh'd. Nay, (I hope to be excus'd on Account of an honeſt Intention) I have too much Reaſon to fear that many *Scholars*, tho' they occaſionally look into it as *Critics*, and *Commentators*, to ſtudy the Senſe of a difficult Paſſage, do not read it daily, and practically, to direct their Conduct in moral Life, and to warm their Hearts with a feeling Senſe of Piety. But is this ſhewing that you believe Religion to be the one Thing needful? Wou'd you treat any Book with ſuch Contempt, that taught you any infallible Way to Succeſs in Trade, to Riches and Honours. I need not wait for an Anſwer. Chriſtianity tells us [and you profeſs your Belief of it] that the Way to eternal Life is narrow, and that we muſt ſtrive to enter into it; that we have many ſtrong Paſſions and Habits to ſubdue; many difficult Virtues to acquire; many Temptations to ſeduce us; many Enemies within our own corrupt Hearts to betray us; many ſubtle, vigilant, potent Enemies from without, to allure and terrify us; that we are always wreſtling, not only againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities and Powers, againſt ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places; that we are to be perpetually upon our Guard againſt the Wiles of the Devil and his Agents, as well as againſt the

the Treachery of our corrupt Nature; to take heed to our Ways, to keep the Door of our Lips, and to watch the ſecret Motions of our Thoughts; and therefore, that the working out of our Salvation being a Thing of ſuch Labour and Difficulty, as well as infinite Importance, we ought to do it with Fear and Trembling. But let any one look round upon Mankind and obſerve, whether their Looks and Actions ſpeak any ſuch State of Warfare and Danger. Inſtead of being anxious for the Event of ſo momentous an Affair as our eternal Salvation, they look quite eaſy and unconcern'd; Inſtead of being vigilant, they are quite careleſs; inſtead of being active, they are quite indolent. And is this Behaviour conſiſtent with a Perſuaſion that we think our future Welfare the one Thing needful? The Profeſſors of Chriſtianity declare that they are Citizens of another Country, that their true Riches are in Heaven, and that their heavenly Treaſure will be as durable, and inconceivable, as the Torments of the Wicked; and yet Chriſtians in general are ſo far from having their Thoughts ſo full of an Immortality of ſuch a Bliſs, as to have it always lie uppermoſt for a conſtant governing Principle, that they ſeldom think of it. Their Thoughts, their Inclinations, their Maxims and Schemes, are all ſenſual, and worldly. One Man is wholly intent upon a Circle of Amuſements and Diverſions. This is the grand Buſineſs of his *animal* Life. Another is as in-

tent upon accumulating Wealth and making a Family; his Head and Heart are quite full of it. A Third is wholly poſſeſſed with ambitious Deſires; Places and Honours he muſt have, let the Means of acquiring Them be ever ſo inconſiſtent with the Precepts of his Religion, and his future Happineſs and Glory. It is impoſſible that ſuch Men ſhou'd think their Salvation the one Thing needful, when they take ſo little Care to ſecure it. And yet theſe narrow minded *Creatures* (I cannot call them *Men*) think themſelves, and are thought by others to be, the only ſhrewd People, becauſe they value the poor, beggarly Concerns of this Life above thoſe of Eternity. O gracious God! whence ariſes this Sottiſhneſs? It is thou only, the Searcher of Hearts, that knoweſt the true Cauſe. Do thou take the Veil from before our Eyes. Break the Charm that bewitches us. Convince us that nothing but *Eternity* deſerves our Solicitude; that our Salvation is the one Thing needful, and that whatever does not tend to it is Vanity and Folly. Make us ſee more clearly, and know more feelingly, theſe great Truths. Let them always be uppermoſt in our Thoughts, and give them ſuch Force and Energy, that they may bring forth in us the Fruits of good Living, to thy Honour, and the Salvation of our Souls.

HEBREWS, Chap. x. Ver. 25.

Not forſaking the Aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the Manner of ſome is, but exhorting one another.

THIS Precept was given by St. *Paul* in the Times of *Perſecution*; which occaſion'd many to abſent themſelves from religious Meetings, for the Preſervation of their Lives, their Liberties, and Eſtates. *We* are not under That Temptation to neglect *our* Duty; yet, in moſt Places it is ſhamefully neglected; and Men are ſo far from *exhorting*, that they are more apt to *diſcourage*, one another, by ſpeaking lightly of it. It cannot, therefore, be *unſeaſonable*, and I hope, it will not be *unprofitable*, if I diſcourſe to you upon the Three following Heads.

Firſt, That the forſaking of ſuch Aſſemblies is a virtual Defection from the Chriſtian Faith, and a Renunciation of our Religion.

Secondly, That it is a Neglect of the neceſſary Means of Grace without which we ſhall not be able, or willing, to practiſe the other Duties of Religion, or long to preſerve in our Minds any true Senſe of it.

Thirdly, To enforce the Duty of Exhorting one another to Aſſemble ourſelves.

Firſt, The forſaking the Aſſembling of ourſelves together for publick Worſhip is a virtual Defection from the Chriſtian Faith, and a Renunciation of our Religion.

For, what is the End of ſuch Aſſemblies, but to make publick Profeſſion of our religious Opinions; to acknowledge the Being, Attributes, and Diſpenſations of That God, in whom we believe; our Relations, and Obligations to him for our Creation, Preſervation, and Redemption? And our refuſing publickly to teſtify This our Belief, is, in Effect, to declare that we do not believe them. There never was any People in the World, who believed a God, and yet did not publickly worſhip him agreeably to their Notions of him.

The *Heathens*, however different in their Opinions concerning their Deities, in different Countries, agreed in this great Article, *viz.* to join together in a publick Acknowledgment of God and his Providence over them. As they all ow'd their Being and the Continuance of it to the Power of their Creator, they all, as many as conveniently could, aſſembled together to teſtify their common Dependance upon him. As they were conſcious that they had all been guilty of many Things which were offenſive and diſpleaſing to the Deity, they united in offering up ſuch Oblations and Sacrifices, as they thought might be the Means

Means of appeaſing God's Anger, and averting his Judgments. As they believ'd that he continually interpos'd to over-rule and govern the Affairs of the World, they offer'd up their joint and publick Requeſts, that he wou'd protect and bleſs them. This was ſo univerſal a Practice, and it is a Practice ſo agreeable to *natural Reaſon*, that if any one had been known wholly to withdraw himſelf from ſuch religious Meetings, He wou'd have been deem'd an Atheiſt, who deny'd God's Being and Providence; he wou'd have been wonder'd at as a Monſter; he wou'd have been deteſted as an odious and dangerous Perſon; he wou'd have been executed, or baniſh'd the Society, as one diſqualified for it.

The Religion of the *Jews* was different from That of the *Heathens*, but they agreed with them in having Aſſemblies wherein they jointly and publickly worſhip'd their God, ſuitably to their Faith. Beſides the Truths of *Natural Religion*, they were favour'd with *particular Revelations* of God's Nature and Will, and they were enjoin'd *particular Duties and Ordinances*; in Conſequence of which they had thoſe particular *Revelations* publickly read before them, and their *Laws* publickly recited: they united, likewiſe, in the publick Obſervance of their *peculiar Ordinances*. And, can we imagine, that if any *one* among theſe *Jews* had *totally*, or *generally*, abſented himſelf from their religious Aſſemblies, *never*, or *ſeldom*,

appearing to hear the Word of their God read, and his Laws rehears'd to them; *never*, or *ſeldom* aſſiſting at the *common Rites* and *Ceremonies*; never partaking with them of the *common Ordinances* of their Religion: Can we imagine, I ſay, that ſuch an one wou'd not have been thought, and very juſtly, to have thereby diſown'd his Belief of the *Jewiſh Religion?*

The Religion of us *Chriſtians* is different from that of the *Jews*, as the *Jewiſh* Religion was different from that of the *Heathens*. We have ſtill more extraordinary Diſcoveries of the Nature and Will of God; our Duty in the New Teſtament is more particularly explain'd to us, and we have common Ordinances, tho' fewer in Number, appointed us. Whoever, therefore, after the Manner of too many *nominal* Chriſtians, refuſes to appear at our Chriſtian Aſſemblies, there to hear the *Scriptures* read and expounded, there publickly to profeſs the *Doctrines*, and attend upon the *Inſtitutions*, of our Religion; ſuch an one St. *Paul*, the inſpired Apoſtle of *Jeſus Chriſt*; ſuch an one the *Nature* and *Reaſon* of the Thing, declare to be an *Apoſtate* from the *Faith*, and to have rejected the Authority of our *bleſſed Saviour*. If he *never*, or *ſeldom* goes to any Place of publick Worſhip, nor makes any Kind of publick Profeſſion of ſome Religion, we have no Room to believe that he has any religious Opinions at all, nor has he any Right to the Protection and Benefits of

of the Community, of which he is a Member, becauſe he can give no Security to it for his good Behaviour, as having no Principles, no Conſcience to bind him to it. If there be any Perſons among *us* ſo unhappy in their Education, ſo aukward in their Way of Thinking, that they cannot ſee ſufficient Evidence for the Truth of *Revelation* after the moſt diligent and impartial Enquiry [which, however, cannot well be ſuppos'd] we will believe them to be in Earneſt, when we ſee them ſeriouſly applying to *Parliament*, as all other *Diſſenters* from the *eſtabliſh'd* Religion have done, for the Liberty of worſhipping God in their own Way. But, while they worſhip no God at all, we are to conſider them as perfect *Infidels*, who deny his Exiſtence, or, at beſt, as *Epicureans*, who deny his Providence, both which Notions are equally abſurd in themſelves and equally detrimental to Society. And, yet, in Oppoſition to the Sentiments of St. *Paul*, to the Reproach of *Common Senſe*, to the great Scandal and Prejudice of our *Country*, Men, who make no Manner of Profeſſion of any Religion, nay, and who openly profeſs that they have none, and make a Jeſt of all that have any, are not only permitted to call themſelves by the honourable Name of *Chriſtians*, not only to enjoy the common Privileges of a *Chriſtian Community*, but are admitted, frequently, into the moſt reputable Situations, into Places of Truſt

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and Power, into the Familiarity and Intimacy of the moſt reſpected, beſt beloved Friends.*

Thus we ſee that the Aſſembling of ourſelves together for publick Worſhip is ſo *eſſential* to Religion, that a *total*, or *general*, Abſtinence from them, (for an *occaſional* Attendance may be reſolv'd into Curioſity, or temporal Intereſt, and ſo conſequently can be no Argument of our Faith) is to be underſtood as a Renunciation of it; which, I think, is a very ſufficient Proof of the great Importance of the Duty.

But, as it is in its own Nature ſo much of the *Eſſence* of Religion, that we cannot rea-

* Theſe *Infidels* generally affect to paſs under the Denomination of *Deiſts*; but upon an Acquaintance with Them, (as I have had with ſeveral; and, having been faithful in not betraying the Confidence which They placed in Me, They ſpoke their Sentiments without any Reſerve) They always *profeſs'd* Themſelves Infidels *at large*, who believ'd no Religious Truths at all. Even Theſe *Atheiſts*, tho' They cannot be oblig'd in *Conſcience*, (there being no ſuch Thing as *Conſcience* without a *God*) if there could be ſuch a Thing as a *Tie*, or OBLIGATION, upon Them, would be *oblig'd*, to encourage ſome Sort of publick *Worſhip*, becauſe it has been, from *Experience*, the Opinion of All *Ages* and *Nations*, that *Society* cannot ſubſiſt without *Virtue*, nor *Virtue* without *Religious* WORSHIP. The *publick Good* requires This from Them; and, if there be no Being that ſees into their Hearts, and can call Them to an Account for it, They cannot have any reaſonable Scruples about Acting an *Hypocritical* Part. It muſt be to *Them* as *indifferent* a Thing as taking a Walk, or ſpending an Hour in any other Way, whether of *Buſineſs*, or *Amuſement*. I have been credibly inform'd that, upon This Perſuaſion, *Collins* went to Church very regularly, for the Sake of ſetting an *Example*, tho' his *Vanity* made Him ſpoil all by employing himſelf in *Reading ſomething elſe*, inſtead of *Appearing* to join in the Service.

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ſonably pretend to any Religion without it; ſo is it, likewiſe, a neceſſary *Means* of Religion; neceſſary in Order to preſerve in our Minds a true Senſe of it, and to enable us to perform the Duties of it—And it is a *Means* of Religion both in a *natural*, and *preternatural* Way.

Firſt, It is in itſelf a *natural* Means of improving our religious Sentiments and Diſpoſitions.—For, what can more *naturally* tend to give us an awful Senſe of God, a Love and Fear of him, than our Aſſembling together to acknowledge him with united Voices, to be the common Parent and Support of the whole World? To celebrate his adorable Perfections? And to pay our joint Tribute of Thankſgiving for the many Inſtances of his Goodneſs to us? The very Exerciſe of theſe religious Acts will help to increaſe the religious Thoughts from whence they flow. They act upon each other like the Soul and the Body; and, by the Help of the *Senſes*, will produce much ſtranger Effects than any *private* Meditations, or Addreſſes to God. In the Performance of *publick*, or *joint*, Prayer, the Looks, and Geſtures, and Voices of the Congregation will excite and inflame in each other pious Affections. For Inſtance, The united Voice of a Number of People, confeſſing their Sins to God with a proper Tone of Voice, accompanied with ſuitable Looks and Geſtures, expreſſive of Sorrow, and Shame, and Fear; This, I ſay, will have a much

a much greater Effect towards anſwering the proper Ends of Confeſſion than a *private* Acknowledgment of their Sins is naturally fitted to produce, becauſe the Condition of the Mind, during its Union with the Body, is ſuch, that it neceſſarily receives ſtrong Impreſſions from *external* Objects. In like Manner the Voice of Joy and Gratitude, in our Songs of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, will help to produce, or increaſe, thoſe Emotions and Affections of which they are naturally expreſſive. I am not now uſing any abſtracted, or difficult Arguments, but only ſpeaking what every one of you knows, and feels to be true.

Tho' theſe be *natural* Means, which, aſſiſted by the *ſupernatural* Influence of God's holy Spirit, will produce their genuine Effects of Piety, and Virtue; yet, they will not, *alone*, anſwer thoſe great Ends. *Grace* aſſiſts *natural Means*, and does not operate *without* them, tho' it *cou'd* act as *inſtantaneouſly*, as when the Word of God's Power ſpake the World into Being. But, *ſecond* Cauſes in *religious* Matters will do nothing without the Concurrence of God, the *Firſt Cauſe* of all Things. If a Perſon, without any Devotion were to be preſent in a Congregation, where the moſt ardent Piety was expreſs'd in their Looks, their Voices, and their Geſtures, he wou'd as naturally and neceſſarily find himſelf affected, as a Man is mov'd by a fine Picture, a mu-

a muſical Voice, or a good Inſtrument: but, they wou'd not produce any permanent Effects towards making him a better Chriſtian, without the ſecret Operation of the original Fountain of all *divine*, as well as *natural* Life. The ſame *Spirit* which firſt mov'd upon the Face of the Waters, muſt move upon our Hearts. The *natural* Means are to our Souls, like the Wood upon the Altar, which was lighted by the Fire that deſcended from above. The Neceſſity of God's *preventing* and *aſſiſting* Grace, towards an acceptable Performance of our Duty, is plainly aſſerted in the tenth Article of our Church, in theſe Words: "The "Condition of Man after the Fall of *Adam* is "ſuch, that he cannot turn and prepare himſelf, by his *own natural* Strength, and good "Works, to Faith and Calling upon God. "Wherefore, we have no Power to do good "Works pleaſant and acceptable to God "without the Grace of God preventing us, "that we may have a good Will, and working with us when we *have* That good "Will." The ſame Notion runs through our whole Liturgy. I make no Doubt but that thoſe *Heathens*, who made ſuch conſiderable Advances in the Knowledge of God, and Improvements in moral Virtues, had ſome *extraordinary* Aſſiſtances, tho' in a much lower Degree than *good Chriſtians* enjoy that heavenly Gift. When *Tully*, one of the moſt eminent of them ſays, every extraordinary Genius had

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the Benefit of ſome divine Communications; it is probable that under the Notion of a divine *Afflatus*, or *Inſpiration*, he did not only mean ſome *preternatural Illuminations* to direct the *Underſtanding*, but, ſome *Influence* to incline the perverſe Tendency of the *Will*, and mend the deprav'd Affections of the *Heart*, ſince he muſt have been ſenſible that They ſtood in as much Need of ſome *foreign* Aid, as the *intellectual Faculties*. Some others among them deliver'd this Notion in ſtill more expreſs Terms. Tho' the *Old* Teſtament contains no expreſs Promiſe of the Aſſiſtances of the Spirit, it is evident that the holy Men under That Diſpenſation had a Perſuaſion of ſuch Aſſiſtance, and prayed for it. The *Royal Prophet* is a ſtrong Proof of the Fact. He prays God to *open*, and *turn his Eyes*; to *unite* and *incline his Heart*; to *make him to go*; to *guide* and *lead him*; to *create in him* a *clean Heart*, and *renew* a *right Spirit within him*. *Solomon*, alſo, ſays that *God giveth Wiſdom*; that he *directs Mens Paths*, and *giveth Grace to the lowly*. But, that theſe great Advantages were to be enjoy'd in fuller Meaſure under the *Chriſtian* Covenant of *Grace* and *Truth*, than under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, we learn from the *Prophecies*. Take That remarkable one of *Jeremiah* for an Inſtance. *I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, They ſhall all know me from the leaſt of them to the greateſt.* But, *Ezekiel* ſtill

more

more plainly. A *new Heart alſo will I give*, and *a new Spirit will I put* within you, and I *will take away the ſtony Heart out of your Fleſh*, and I *will put my Spirit within you*, and *cauſe you to walk in my Statutes*, and ye *ſhall keep my Judgments* and *do them*. And, that theſe Prophecies do relate to the *Goſpel* Diſpenſation cannot be queſtion'd ſince *Jeremiah*'s Words, to which the others are equivalent, are cited and apply'd to it in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. Our *bleſſed Saviour* in his laſt Diſcourſe to his Diſciples tells them, " That *his heavenly Fa-* " *ther wou'd* give *the holy Spirit to every one* " *that aſked him*." Again, he ſays " My *Fa-* " *ther* and I *will make our Abode with him*." *Without me ye can do Nothing*. Our Bodies are ſaid to be *Temples of God, holy Habitations to him through the Spirit*. St. *Paul* ſpeaks of the *Love of God ſhed abroad in our Hearts by the Spirit*. He prays often for the Churches, that *God wou'd ſtabliſh*, *comfort*, and *perfect them*, *enlighten* and *ſtrengthen* them. It is ſaid, that *God open'd the Heart of* Lydia, ſo *that ſhe attended to the Things that were ſpoken of St.* Paul. And God is ſaid *to work in us both to will and to do* of *his good Pleaſure*. Theſe and many other Places put it beyond all Manner of Doubt that there are *inward* Communications from God to the Powers of the Soul, by which we are made both to apprehend the Truths of Religion, to remember, and reflect on them, and to conſider and follow them more

more effectually. Some Places, indeed, where the Gifts of the *Spirit* are ſpoken of, either *prophetically* in the *Old* Teſtament, by way of *Promiſe* by our Saviour in the *New*, or by way of *Doctrine*, *Direction*, *Exhortation* and *Comfort* by the *Apoſtles*, may ſignify *more immediately* thoſe *extraordinary Powers* of working *Miracles* for the Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity; yet, many of them, if not all that I have cited, are incapable of being reſtrained to thoſe *temporary* Gifts which ceaſed after the Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, but are equally applicable to Chriſtians in *general*, and muſt relate to the ordinary and common Exigencies of Chriſtians to the End of the World. But, how are we to acquire theſe Aſſiſtances of the *holy Spirit* which are thus abſolutely neceſſary to a Chriſtian Life? Before we can receive any Nutriment from the Stock, we muſt become Branches by Ingraftment. Before our carnal Nature can receive any new Principle of ſpiritual Life, we muſt be born again of *Water* and the *holy Spirit* at our *Baptiſm*. By this divine Inſtitution we, who were by *Nature* dead to all good Diſpoſitions and Reſolutions, acquire an *inward Principle* of *Holineſs*. But, as the *natural* Life muſt be ſupported by continual Supplies, and our Strength and Vigour will be in Proportion to our Care in the Uſe of the common *Means* of *Health*, ſo our *ſpiritual* Growth and Improvement will keep Pace with our Endeavours, and Attendance upon

upon thoſe *Ordinances* which God has appointed as the *Means* of conveying his Grace. God doth not *inſpire* us with the Knowledge of our Duty, as he imparted divine Truths to the *Apoſtles*; neither will he *inſtantaneouſly* and *irreſiſtibly* infuſe good Diſpoſitions into us, as he converted St. *Paul*. We muſt diligently read, and ſeriouſly meditate. Like *holy David*, we muſt make God's Law our Study, as often as the neceſſary Affairs of Life will permit, and always upon the *Sunday*, the Day ſet apart, by the Authority of God and Man, for that Purpoſe. We muſt commune with our Heart in our Chamber and be ſtill, retir'd from the Noiſe and Buſtle of the World; and then we may be aſſur'd of God's Bleſſing upon Theſe Means of Knowledge and Improvement. Provided always, that we aſk for it by diligent Prayer. God will give his Spirit, but it is to thoſe who *aſk* it. *Aſk and ye ſhall have, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be open'd* unto you; which is a plain Declaration that if we obſtinately refuſe, or careleſsly neglect, to uſe theſe *appointed Means, viz. Prayer*, we are not to expect his Grace. But *publick* and *joint* Prayer, as it does more Honour, ſo it is more acceptable to the ſupreme Being than *private* Devotion; and he has aſſur'd us that he will be more ready to receive, and anſwer thoſe Petitions. *Where two or three are gather'd together in his Name*, there is God more immediately preſent by his

Angels, and by his gracious Acceptance, and Influence. Such Devotions receive Strength not only from their *Union*, but from the *Sacredneſs* of the *Place* where they are offer'd, and of the *Perſon* who offers them. They are, both of them, in the moſt ſolemn Manner *dedicated* to God himſelf for That Purpoſe; and it wou'd be reaſonable to believe, tho' he had made no expreſs Declaration of his Will, that he ſhou'd accompany the Obſervance of his *own Inſtitutions* with peculiar Marks of his Favour. And, if there can be any one Act of CHRISTIAN Worſhip preferable to another; in its Nature more affecting; in its Inſtitution more ſolemn; in its Effects more beneficial, and a greater Means of Grace; it is the *bleſſed Sacrament* of our Lord's Supper; that divine and awful Inſtitution, appointed for the Commemoration of his Death, which was the Purchaſe of all the Gifts of the holy Spirit. *There* we have the cloſeſt Union and Communion with Chriſt, of which we are capable in this Life. *There* we *dwell in him*, and *he in us*; we are *one with Chriſt*, and *he with us*. *There*, therefore, we may expect to receive the moſt intimate Communications of his heavenly Grace and Favour.

After what has been ſaid it can be no Wonder to you, if thoſe who wilfully and habitually forſake the Aſſembling themſelves together for *Chriſtian* Worſhip [which is not only a neceſſary Manner of profeſſing ourſelves

ſelves Chriſtians, but the neceſſary Means of preſerving a true Senſe of Religion in our Minds, and of obtaining the divine Aſſiſtance without which we cannot poſſibly be truly religious:] It can be no Wonder, I ſay, that *ſuch* ſhould fall away into *Infidelity* or *Immorality*; or that thoſe who ſeldom attend upon publick Worſhip, ſhou'd be weak in Faith, and very imperfect in the Diſcharge of their Duty. Theſe Effects are as natural as it is for a Man to die, who takes in no Suſtenance to ſupport Life, and to be ſickly if he does not take enough to keep Him in Health.

I have left myſelf but little Time for the laſt Head of my Diſcourſe, but I muſt bear hard upon your Patience while I ſay *ſomething* upon ſo *material* a Point, as That of the Duty of exhorting one another to a due Attendance upon publick Worſhip.

It is Part of our bleſſed Lord's Prayer, (which ought to be our *daily* Prayer) that God's Will *may be done* on *Earth*, *as it is in Heaven*. The *Angels* in Heaven are continually attending upon God to receive his Commands; and if we imitate theſe miniſtring Spirits in their Readineſs and Alacrity in executing their Commiſſions from their heavenly King, we ſhall exhort one another to repair, as often as we can, to the Courts of the Lord's Houſe, in Honour of his moſt glorious Name, and in Obedience to his Commands.

But, *Charity* likewiſe requires This of us. A good-natur'd Man wou'd be forward to give an ignorant and inadvertent Neighbour Advice in any important Affair, or to warn him of any approaching Danger. Now, I wou'd aſk any Man in his Senſes what can be of greater Importance than the publick Worſhip of our Maker, who gave us our Being and continually ſuſtains us by his Almighty Power; of our univerſal Governor who by his watchful Providence preſerves us; of our bleſſed Redeemer who ſaved us from Deſtruction, and purchas'd for us eternal Happineſs; of our tremendous Judge who is to paſs an irreverſible Sentence upon us at the laſt great and ſolemn Audit of the World? Or, what greater Danger can attend any one than the Danger of loſing his Title to the Bleſſings of God's Providence by refuſing publickly to acknowledge them; of loſing the bleſſed Influences of God's Grace by neglecting the Means of obtaining it; of incurring his moſt heavy Diſpleaſure by openly ſlighting him? If, therefore, you have any Bowels of Compaſſion, it muſt be a Concern to you to ſee any of your Brethren ſo unmindful of their Security, ſo wanting to their own Happineſs. I will be bold to ſay, that an *Unconcernedneſs* on theſe Occaſions is a plain Proof that Men are not, themſelves, truly ſenſible of the vaſt Importance of religious Worſhip, or they wou'd leave no Arts of Perſuaſion unattempted to prevail

prevail upon each other to attend it. *Neighbours* wou'd decently remind; *Friends* wou'd kindly and importunately intreat; *Parents* and *Maſters*, inſtead of ſetting a bad Example, wou'd peremptorily command; *Church-Officers* wou'd regularly preſent Abſenters; and *Magiſtrates* wou'd rigorouſly execute the Laws upon them.

The *Clergy* are more particularly oblig'd to be inſtant in Seaſon and out of Seaſon, whether the People will hear or whether they will forbear. *Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.* This is a Direction given to *all* Chriſtians; but the *Clergy* are commanded to do it with all Authority and Severity, and that publickly where the Crime is of a publick Nature, and the Remiſſneſs of their People requires a ſharp Admonition. But, as this is a Part of my Office very diſagreeable to my Temper, ſo I hope you will give me no Occaſion to exerciſe it. Yet, as I cannot wholly acquit you of Neglect, eſpecially thoſe of you, who have no Pretence, from Buſineſs, and whoſe Duty it is to ſet a good Example to their Inferiors; thoſe who think it ſufficient to ſerve God on one Part of the Day, and lawful to indulge and divert themſelves either at Home, or Abroad, on the other; thoſe who take the Opportunity of doing that on the *Sunday* which they cannot do on any other Day without ſome

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Hindrance to their worldly Business; all such (and some such there are amongst us) with an Earnestness becoming the Greatness of their Danger, and my Concern, but with a Tenderness agreeable to my Affection for them, I exhort, I beseech, I conjure to attend the publick Worship of God as often as possible, and also to see that their Families do their Duty in This great Article of it, that They may not be Partakers with them in this sinful Neglect.

FINIS.

BOOKS publiſh'd by the ſame AUTHOR.

A SERMON againſt *Popery*, preach'd at the Time of the laſt *Rebellion*; and a Pamphlet in Defence of his Majeſty's *Hereditary* Title to the Crown. Both publiſh'd by Deputy *John Clark*, by the *Royal Exchange*.

The Nature and Duty of Benevolence.

The Nature and Duty of Living peaceably with all Men.

An Appeal to the *Common Senſe*, &c. of the *Laity* concerning *Tithes*. All Three publiſh'd by *W. Ruſſel*, at *Horace's Head* without *Temple-Bar*.

Three Dialogues upon *Anger* and *Forgiveneſs*; publiſh'd by Mr. *Owen* within *Temple-Bar*.